

LECTURES & ESSAYS,

BY

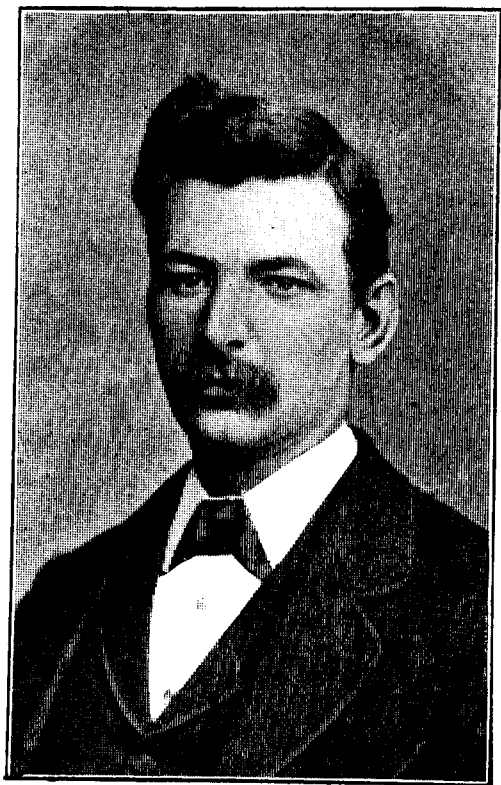
Arthur B. Moss.





BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

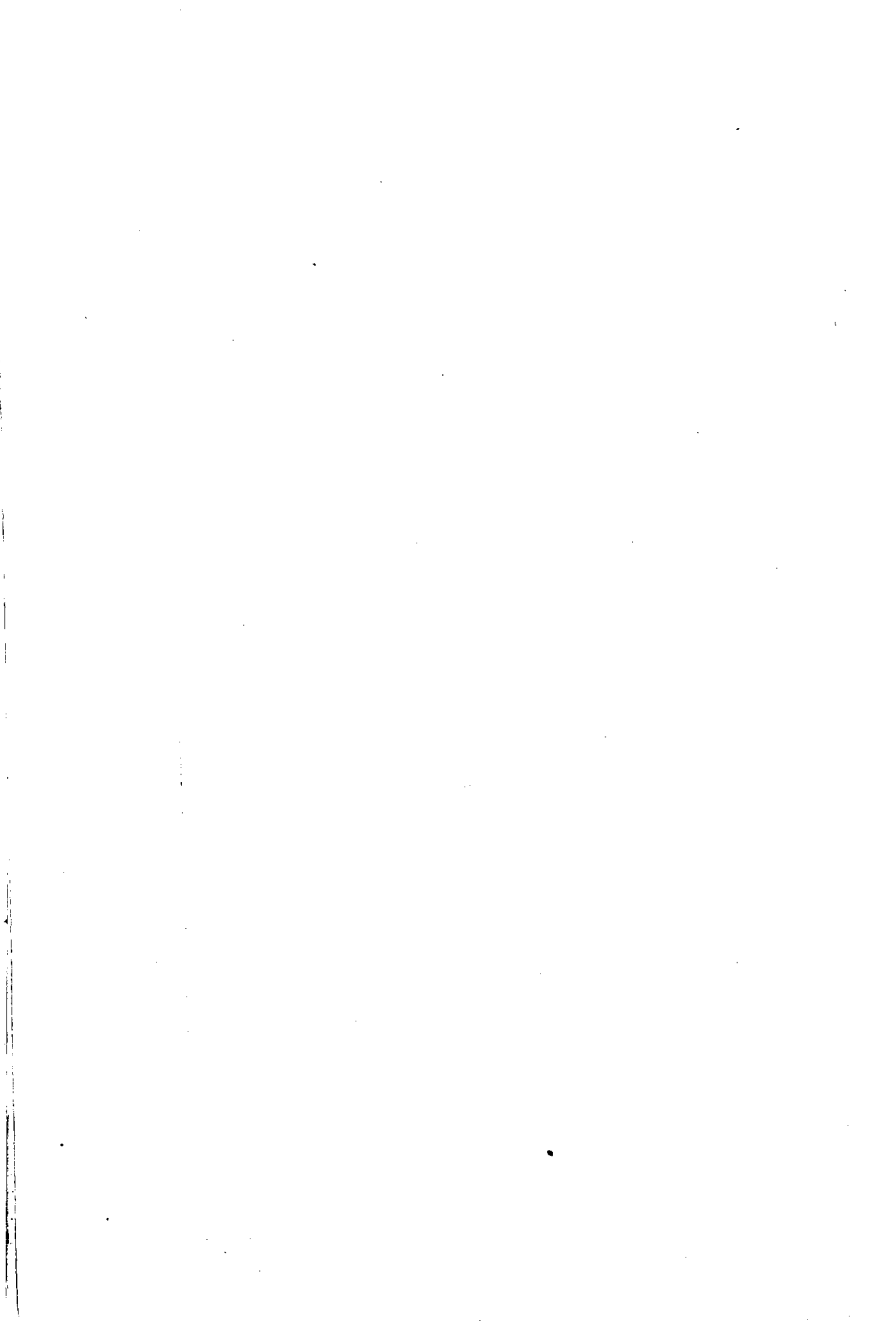
OF



ARTHUR B. MOSS.

(Reprinted, with additions, from 'The Radical'.)

G. STANDRING, 7 & 9 Finsbury-street, E.C.—One Penny.





Biographical Sketch of Arthur B. Moss.

MR. ARTHUR B. MOSS is the third son of George William Moss. He was born on the 8th May, 1855, in the parish of Horselydown, near London Bridge. His father was manager of a large wharf on the river Thames. He was a well educated man, and had all his children well instructed. The subject of our sketch was educated in the classical department of St. Olave's Grammar School, Tooley Street, one of the largest and finest schools in England. At the age of twelve, when he left school, Moss was accounted a good scholar. Owing to his father losing his employment on account of ill-health, he had to turn out into the world rather early in life. At first he got employment at the establishment of a large stationer and newsvendor in the City. From that he became a clerk at a wholesale drug house in Coleman Street; but, not liking the confinement of an office, he left to become a reporter, and afterwards dramatic critic, for a South London journal. For some years he worked at this; but, mainly on account of a change of belief, he lost this berth and took to journalism generally. Finding this a rather precarious mode of earning a living, he applied for an appointment as School Board officer for the Southwark division, and succeeded in obtaining it; still devoting his leisure time in the evenings to writing for one or other of the Liberal journals in South London.

Until his sixteenth year he was a devout Christian, attending Sunday-school and church regularly. About this time some of his friends thought that he possessed qualities specially suitable for the work of the Church, and he was induced to undertake a careful study of the Bible. One evening he met his eldest brother—Alfred Moss—and entered into a discussion with him on Biblical matters. He had not long before been studying astronomy, and his brother, having already become sceptical, asked him if he thought it was probable that Jesus had died on

all other planets as well as this one. The train of thought into which this idea threw him troubled him for some time, and he soon found himself calling in question a large number of the accepted notions of orthodox Christians. At that time (his seventeenth year) he had just joined the Bermondsey Institute, of which he was for several years writing master and teacher of elocution; and an old member induced him first to read Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason," and subsequently to attend, at the Hall of Science, a debate between Dr. Sexton and Mr. Foote on Spiritualism. He then read Bishop Colenso's Examination of the Pentateuch, John Stuart Mill's Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy and a long list of minor heretical works, which had the effect of converting him into a thoroughgoing Freethinker. The first thing to do was to break away from his Christian friends, which he did by questioning the truth of the Bible at the Sunday-school, and declaring that he could no longer believe it. This step was painful enough, but the most painful part of the whole business was that when the Rev. Thomas Marsden, the rector of St. John's Church, Horselydown, found out that Moss had become a Freethinker, he called upon his mother, who was a Sunday-school teacher in the girls' department at St. John's, and told her that he would not have the mother of an "infidel" teaching in his school. This grieved Moss greatly. His father having died, he was left his mother's chief support—his eldest brother having married, and the two others having gone into the army. All his brothers are now Freethinkers; his sisters remain Christians.

In 1876 he attended a course of lectures by Professor Leoni Levi on Political Economy, at King's College, and succeeded in winning one of the prizes—a handsomely bound volume of Shakespeare's plays and a volume on Rhetoric by Professor Bain. For the next few years he was very diligent in study, reading almost all John Stuart Mill's works with avidity, as well as a fair share of scientific books. He was just over twenty years of age when he delivered his first lecture on the Free-thought platform, Mr. T. E. Green having invited him to speak at the Lyceum, Kingston-on-Thames. He chose the much-misunderstood subject of the "Freedom of the Will," and, though afraid that he did not do justice to the theme, he succeeded in holding the attention of and pleasing the audience. After three or four years of practice, he got a large number of engagements and lectured all over the country. During all this time, however, he worked hard in his double capacity of reporter

and critic. Being a Radical in politics, he frequently devoted himself to lecturing on political subjects, speaking on public questions in various parts of London. He has had stormy meetings at times, being on one occasion, at Hyde Park, knocked off the platform by a turbulent crowd, but he fought his way back and regained possession. In two elections he spoke for Professor Rogers and Arthur Cohen, Q.C., and from the former received a special letter of thanks for the work he had done in promoting that gentleman's return. On Sundays when he was not engaged he attended the Hall of Science, and listened to Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Holyoake, Mr. Watts, Mr. Foote, and other leaders of the Freethought movement. In order to make his lectures successful, Mr. Moss wrote out the substance of some of them, and has since issued them in pamphlet form. In debate he has frequently encountered some of the representatives of the Christian Evidence Society.

In 1881 Mr. Moss became acquainted with George R. Sims, the dramatic author, and accompanied him and Mr. Barnard, the artist, through the slum-land of London, and prepared a large portion of the material for "How the Poor Live." He was also the means of converting Mr. Sims to a belief in the Malthusian law of population. In the series of articles in the *Daily News* on "Horrible London," Mr. Sims received the encomiums of Professor Fawcett for the courage with which he had expounded that remedy for poverty.

From the first, Mr. Moss has been a frequent contributor to the *Freethinker*. He has also written at times for the *National Reformer*, *Secular Chronicle*, and *Secular Review*, as well as being a frequent writer for the *Truthseeker*. When Mr. Foote went to gaol Mr. Moss came to the aid of Dr. Aveling and contributed regularly to the prosecuted journal. In addition to this, he has done a good deal of theatrical work. Mr. Moss has written a large number of dramatic sketches, which have been favorably received by the public. He is also part-author of three dramas—two in collaboration with Mr. Henry Witton, and one with W. J. Patmore, secretary of G. R. Sims. Mr. Moss has had two or three written debates, the most important of which was with a Scotch novelist, Agnes Rollo Wilkie, on "Was Jesus God or Man?"

Last March Mr. Moss came in conflict with his employers. He wrote a letter to Mr. J. R. Kelly, M.P. for North Camberwell, asking him to vote for the Oaths Bill. Somewhat indiscreetly, he wrote the letter on paper on the back of which

was a list of his lectures. Mr. Kelly employed a man to find out where he (Moss) worked, and then sent a letter to the Chairman of the School Board demanding his dismissal. His character being good, the School Board could not dismiss him, but they passed resolutions prohibiting him from lecturing or advertising his publications.

The following is abridged from the current issue of the *Church Reformer*:—

“Now it must be remembered that there was no hint that Mr. Moss’s work as a visitor was badly done—on the contrary, it was well done; no hint, either, that he in the slightest way used his position as a visitor to circulate his tracts or propagate his opinions—on the contrary, he never even lectured in the district in which he was a visitor. This persecution is grounded simply upon the character of his lectures and his pamphlets. The question is a plain and broad one. Mr. Moss is fighting for the same liberty of utterance which has been fought for and won by the Dissenters, Roman Catholics and Jews.

“‘We teach the Bible and religion in our schools,’ say Mr. Gover and Mr. Coxhead, who are the chief leaders in this piece of stupid, ignorant intolerance; ‘we cannot have one of our own officers denying the truth of what we teach.’ ‘As well,’ said one sapient member, ‘might an agent of Thorley’s Food for Cattle go about saying the food was poison.’ This is just on a par with those who said, We have an Established Church; no officer of the State, no loyal citizen should be allowed to contradict or refute it. The School Board has established an unsectarian rate-supported religion, and now wants to punish any of its officers who dissent from it. Of course the real answer to all this is that we give perfect freedom to all our other visitors, to believe, or to teach, or preach what they think right, out of their hours devoted to their work for us; that we have Roman Catholics, Jews, English Catholics, Unitarians, and every kind of Protestant to deal with, and that it is absurd to assume that there is some special kind of School Board religion which the officers of the Board are bound to defend or not to attack. Indeed, so far as the Education Act and the Board’s rules go, there is nothing to hinder an Atheist from giving the Bible lesson and drawing what deductions as to religion or morality he thinks fit from the Bible. For the Board allows no catechism or ‘man-made creeds,’ and there are plenty of Freethinkers among the Board School teachers. ‘Oh,’ but says Mr. Gover, ‘it is shocking that such questions as “Is Jesus an Impostor?”

should be discussed by one of our officers.' On the contrary, we maintain that it is most useful that such a question should be discussed; that nothing but good in the long run can come from the free discussion of it; that it would be well for Messrs. Gover and Coxhead to be forced to discuss it: for they act as if indeed Jesus Christ, instead of being the eternal Word of God, as he claimed to be, was the puniest personage imaginable, so puny that He, His Church, and His religion would be overthrown if Mr. Moss were allowed to express his opinion about Him."

Mr. Moss has appeared twice before the Bye-Laws Committee; on the first occasion, before the old Board, he delivered a speech in favor of intellectual freedom which amazed the clerical members of that body. On the second occasion he was cross-examined by the Rev. Joseph Diggle and others, but his answers were so frank and straightforward that some of the members who were disposed at first to vote against him voted in favor of him—notably Mr. Councillor Raphael, the Jewish member. Mrs. Besant, Rev. Stewart Headlam, Rev. Arthur Jephson, Rev. Mr. Courtice, Rev. Copeland Bowie, as well as Mr. Conybeare, M.P., and Mr. Edric Bayley, all spoke splendidly on behalf of freedom.

The motion to rescind the resolution of May 1888 came on before the full Board on Thursday, 7th March; and Mrs. Besant, in one of her finest efforts, appealed for justice and fair play, her eloquent speech being greeted with loud applause.

Mr. Gover, a nonconformist gentleman who has earned an unenviable notoriety as a bigot, moved the previous question in an address of a vindictive and bitter character.

Then followed some very excellent speeches by liberal-minded clergymen in favor of fairness all round; but in the end the discussion was adjourned for a week.

On Thursday, 14th March, Professor Gladstone re-opened the debate, and urged that members of the Board should be careful not to infringe the just rights of their servants. The Rev. Mr. Gent (Principal of St. Mark's College), Rev. Stewart Headlam, Rev. Mr. Courtice and Mr. Councillor Raphael also spoke in support of Mrs. Besant's motion; while Rev. C. Lawrence, Rev. J. J. Coxhead and Mr. Laing spoke against it—the two latter trying to prejudice the case by reading distorted extracts from some of Mr. Moss's pamphlets. Ultimately the motion to rescind was carried by 30 votes against 18.

And so Mr. Moss returns to his work of love: the work of emancipating the human mind from superstition; the work of replacing the errors of theology by the truths of science; the work

of making this world better worth living in ; the work of making people less miserable concerning the future life by making the present life useful and happy, thus promoting the permanent well-being of mankind.

From the foregoing brief sketch it will be seen that Mr. Arthur B. Moss is a man of versatile talents. He writes, plays, and sometimes performs in them ; and, from notices which have appeared in the press, it is clear that he possesses histrionic talent of a high order. He writes for Freethought and Radical journals ; takes part in political movements ; delivers lectures on Sundays ; and works assiduously at his official duties for his daily bread. This is surely a sufficiently active and useful life ; and we hope that Mr. Moss may for many years retain health and strength to continue his labors for the welfare of humanity.



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(With Biographical Sketch.)

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TWO REVELATIONS.

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TWO REVELATIONS.

FOREMOST among the dogmas of the Christian faith is the one comprised in the declaration that the infinite and intelligent Being, who is alleged to rule over the universe, on one occasion, if not more, revealed himself to man, to whom he imparted important information which it would have been impossible for any of the sons of men, by their own unaided intelligence, to have acquired. To question this dogma is to plant the "thin end of the wedge" under the very foundation-stone of the Christian religion. To show the gross stupidity of the alleged Divine revelation, and the truth and potency of the revelations of science, is a task of no great novelty, but nevertheless is one which, in these days of constant and numerous accessions from the Christian fold to the ranks of Freethought, it is at once our highest wisdom and duty, from time to time, to undertake.

To weaken the influence of the Bible, it is only necessary to expose the monstrous pretensions put forward on its behalf; and of these none has had, or continues to have, so strong a hold of the orthodox Christian mind as the doctrine that the Bible is a revelation direct from the supreme ruler of the universe. Let it once be admitted that the Bible is a human production, valuable only in proportion to the truth and utility of its contents, and everything in regard to it will be changed. It will then be divested of its supposed "sacred character;" its fictitious charm will evaporate, and it will be subjected to the same critical ordeal as any other book. Unhappily, that time has not yet arrived. It is still pretended that the Bible differs from all other books in this respect—that, whereas all other books are the productions of frail human

beings possessing more or less value according to the ability and skill of the writers, the Bible is an unique work—the result of a direct and infallible revelation from Deity.

Now, there are many reasons why we should be sceptical of all alleged revelations of God to man; and the notion of an infallible revelation is most illogical and inconsistent. It need not be disputed that, if God is infinite in power, he could reveal himself if he felt so disposed. But, suppose God were to reveal himself, it is questionable whether man, with finite capacities, could understand an “infallible revelation;” or, even if he understood it, that he could infallibly interpret it to others. For it must be obvious to the dullest mind that, presuming God to be an infinite being, and that he revealed himself to man, it could not have been as an infinite being that he so revealed himself, man having no capacity for understanding the infinite, except as the antithesis of the finite. And if God revealed his will to any individual man, that man could only understand and interpret it up to the measure of his capacity; so that, if it left Deity as an infallible expression of his will, without the operation of a most stupendous organic change—viz., that of giving infinite capacity to a finite being—there would be no guarantee that it was infallibly understood or perfectly interpreted to others. Moreover, if God has revealed his will to man, he must have revealed it in some language; and, even supposing that it had been perfectly expressed, it would have been a revelation only to those who heard it, or, in a limited sense, to those who understood the tongue in which it was expressed. On the other hand, if God, instead of personally revealing himself, had written his will in the heavens, so that all men might observe it, still he must have written it there in some language; and, as we have no evidence that the human race has ever spoken an universal tongue, there would always be the liability of its being an unknown tongue to many, or of its being imperfectly translated, and in a measure misunderstood.

With these strong objections to revelation firmly impressed on our mind, we may go to the consideration of the alleged revealed record. And what shall we find? A mass of statements that accord with the careful observations of the wisest among mankind? Not so; the very reverse of this.

We have nothing but statements that are in direct conflict with the universal experience of mankind, false in regard to its science, history, and philosophy, hopelessly confused in its figures, and bad in respect to its morality.

Of the cosmogony of Genesis it need only be remarked that it is believed only by those who hold faith to be a higher faculty than reason, and pretend that it is not unreasonable to maintain that an infinite and omnipotent Deity could make the universe "out of nothing." The most thoughtful even among Christians now admit that there is a great deal in the objection of scientists, that we know nothing of the origination of substance nor of its destruction, but only of a long series of changes practically infinite.

The Bible astronomy, its geology, and biology are alike absurd, being diametrically opposed to the ripest knowledge of our best scientists, and in conflict with the daily experience of mankind. No schoolboy in the fourth standard but now knows the falsity of Biblical astronomy, and could as easily demonstrate that the sun could not have been created on the "fourth day" as that the doctrine of the "blessed Trinity" and the rule of three are not consistent with each other. Recently Mr. Gladstone advanced the ludicrously indefensible theory that the sun was made on the first day, but that the inspired writers did not mention it as being in existence until the fourth—or, in other words, that the sun existed on the first day, but that it was not turned on, like a modern sun-burner, to give light to the earth until the fourth day. As, however, the sun is the great central attractive power round which our earth with several other planets revolve, this theory will scarcely bear the test of serious examination. As to revealed geology, the theologian finds it necessary, in order to reconcile the Bible with modern science, to extend a day of twenty-four hours into a period of indefinite duration, and, in so doing, without removing a single difficulty, he only renders the "revelation" the more incredible. How the difficulty, that grass and herbs could not survive an hour without the sun, is removed by prolonging that sunless period indefinitely, is past human understanding, and must be relegated to the region of blind credulity or religious faith.

A serious attempt to reconcile Genesis with the geological epochs, like Dr. Kinns's book, may be regarded in the

light of a huge joke—the same in kind as, and differing only in a very slight degree from, the attempt of Mr. Pickwick to demonstrate the vast antiquity of the curious inscription on the stone discovered by the Pickwickians in one of their famous excursions. Nor is Mr. Gladstone more successful than Dr. Kinns when he attempts the same impossible task. A few facts of geology, skilfully marshalled by Professor Huxley, pulverise the pious opinion of the great statesman, that the Biblical account of the cosmogony is in exact accordance with modern science. If any fact has been brought to light by the researches of geology, it is that the order of living creatures has been (1) crustacea, (2) fishes, (3) reptiles and birds, (4) mammals generally, and (5) man; but the Mosaic order is threefold—(1) fishes and birds, (2) mammals and reptiles, and (3) man. We have millions and billions of fossil shells in the Cambrian period, long before the existence of fishes; then the great fish period of the Devonian period; then the saurian period; long afterwards come the archaic animals of the mammoth family; then those still nearer approaching the types of animals belonging to the history of man; and finally man, with his contemporaries. Six periods instead of three.

In the study of geology we find the flora and fauna of one period differing greatly from that immediately preceding it—an appreciable gulf separating the animals of one age from those of another. Within six days we have, according to Moses, all living creatures created, from the sea-worms and great marine lizards to the vertebrate animals, including even man himself.

No line of demarcation showing the great periods of time that must have elapsed in the evolution of the lower to the higher forms of life, which all true science now demands, can be found in Genesis, and for this very obvious reason: because the writer of Genesis was wholly ignorant of any such evolution, and the all-wise Deity apparently neglected to supply the information, when he revealed to his chosen servant his method and manner of creation.

Equally unsatisfactory is the Bible view of biology. All the races of the earth are practically alleged to have sprung from Noah and his three sons; but, remembering the long period over which the history of China and India

stretches—a history written in monuments of stone and wood—it is impossible for any intelligent person who has seriously considered the subject with a view of arriving at truth to give credence to teaching which makes the human family less than six thousand years old. How infinitely trivial is all this when compared with the revelations of science—revelations which the study of man has extracted from Nature herself. How insignificant is the Mosaic view of astronomy, when viewed side by side with modern knowledge! From a comparatively small luminary, placed in the heavens to give light to this earth during the day, the sun is seen to be a vast body, 880,000 miles in diameter. The little twinkling stars are magnified into great bodies, many in magnitude vaster than our sun, and at such immense distances that the light of some of them has not yet reached our earth. In our own system we have Jupiter, hundreds of times larger than our earth, with four moons dancing constant attendance upon her; in addition to which we have Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, and Mars, all older, and three of them larger, than the earth which we inhabit.

"It is difficult," says Colenso, "to realise to ourselves the enormous size and distance from us of the fixed stars, and the awful solitude in which each separate star and its little troop of planets exists by itself in the midst of the mighty universe." Perhaps the following calculation may assist the reader's mind to grasp more distinctly and appreciate more fully the grandeur of the heavenly host: "One travelling at railway speed, day and night, $33\frac{1}{3}$ miles an hour, or 100 miles in 3 hours, would reach the moon in 300 days, and at the same rate he would reach the sun in 330 years. But, if he could reach the sun in one single day, it would take 550 years of such travelling to reach the nearest fixed star. And then it must be remembered that the enormous interval, on every side of our sun and its little family, is an awful void of animal and vegetable life. A similar tremendous void must recur between one star and another, and on all sides around each separate star—nay, around each separate mote of nebular star dust." Now, as far as can be ascertained, the nearest fixed star is twenty-one billions of miles from our earth; the next nearest being thirty-seven billions of miles distant; while Sirius is no less than eighty-two billions of

miles away. Nor is this by any means the most distant, for the Polar star is calculated to be two hundred and ninety-two billions of miles distant, and Capella one hundred and thirty-three billion miles still further off.

To return again to the sun, which is the grand centre and animating principle of the planetary system, around which the various planets revolve, and the attractive power by which they are sustained in their orbits—in short, the source of light and heat and all that renders the earth fit for habitation. In magnitude the sun is so vast that figures fail to convey any adequate idea of its immensity. As, however, arithmetical numbers and illustrations are the only means open to us in which to indicate the vast magnitude of this body, I may as well say that its diameter is estimated to be no less than 880,000 miles. Its circumference, or line going quite round it, is 2,764,600 miles; while its surface contains 2,432,800,000,000 of square miles, or, in other words, twelve thousand times the number of square miles on our globe. It has been further estimated that its solid contents comprehend 356,818,739,200,000,000, or three hundred and fifty-six thousand billion of cubical miles—that is, 1,350,000 times the number of solid miles which our terraqueous globe contains; so that it would take 1,350,000 globes as large as our earth to equal the size of the sun. The distance of the sun from our earth is 95,000,000 of miles. Or, to take a familiar illustration: a cannon-ball travelling at its utmost speed is calculated to fly through the air at the rate of 500 miles an hour. Going continuously at this speed, the cannon-ball would reach the sun in twenty-one years, two hundred and forty-five days. Or, again, suppose a train to travel at the rate of four hundred and eighty miles a day, it would require five hundred and forty-seven years of such travelling to reach the sun. In view of these facts, is it not preposterous to suppose that the sun and the stars were not created until the fourth day? How could the earth—nay, the whole of the planets in our system—exist for a single instant without the sun, the great centre of attraction, the great heavenly loadstone which holds them in their respective orbits, and keeps them continuously spinning along in space? How could herbs and grass grow before the existence of the sun? Moreover, if it took deity six days to complete the creation of this world—infinitesimally

small as compared with other heavenly bodies—how much longer would it have required to create the numberless stars that stud the universe, the magnitude and distance of which no words can express?

Geology, instead of showing an earth that has existed only a few thousand years, makes us acquainted with the fossil remains of animals that must have existed thousands of years before Jehovah thought of communicating his opinion on these subjects to Moses, or any other of the inspired Bible-makers of the earth. And, while geology thus opens up for us a vast field for study which inevitably leads to the revelation of the "unity of nature," biology joins hands to demonstrate the great antiquity of the human race and the relation of man to the lower animals, tracing all forms of life down to its lowest condition—the proto-plasmic germ.

By a study of geology we learn to distinguish the epochs or ages that mark the various changes in the earth's condition by reference to the rock systems which constitute the crust of the earth. They are as follows, beginning from the lowest or first formed :—

1. The Metamorphic system.
2. Laurentian system.
3. Cambrian system.
4. Silurian system.
5. Old Red Sandstone system.
6. Carboniferous system (Devonian).
7. Permian system.
8. P. Triassic system.
9. Oolitic system (Jurassic).
10. Chalk system (Cretaceous).
11. Tertiary system.
12. Superficial Deposits.

Each of these systems, consisting of many beds of rock, would require ages of long duration for its formation; yet even the whole lumped together would cover but a part—and perhaps only a small part—of the earth's history. Since the termination of the rock systems the present tribes of plants and animals have come into existence; and it will be seen that the stages of development through which they have passed have been exceedingly

slow—so much so that the evolution of one species into another is, for the most part, quite imperceptible.

Though the earth has undergone many transformations since the first geological epoch, no doubt can exist in any thoughtful mind that, in its general features, it remains the same. Sea and land, atmosphere and light, rains and winds, summer and winter, have remained pretty well the same. Fishes, birds, and quadrupeds have lived for æons, and preyed upon each other, as they now do. These, though altering from time to time, the sea and land often changing positions, remain the component parts of the world as we know it this day.

Taking the earliest series of stratified rocks—those that are found above the granite—no life-remains are discoverable in them. This series, having been brought into their present condition by being subject to continuous burning, are for that reason called "Igneous Rocks."

In the Laurentian system, so called from the St. Lawrence of North America, only the very lowest form of life-remains have been found: something approaching in simplicity to a spreading bunch of coral. Sea-weeds, zoophytes, burrowing worms, and shrimp-like animals are yielded in the Cambrian. In the Silurian are found the remains of a number of marine creatures, numerous species of zoophytes, or animals allied to the "sea pen," corals, crinoids, some species of shell fish, worms, and crustacea. Marine plants, seed weeds, and the Trilobite—a curious creature, in every respect a well-developed crustacean, covered with shelly plates, terminating variously behind in a flexible extremity, and furnished with a headpiece composed of larger plates; eyes of a very complicated structure, which, according to the best fossil anatomists, were fitted with no less than 400 spherical lenses—are also found here.

In the following age we have the Crinoidea and the Cephalopods.

In the fifth epoch (blocked sandstone) appear a large number of now extinct fishes, such as the Placoidians and the Ganoidians.

The Carboniferous age is chiefly remarkable for the production of a land vegetation called coal, no new form of animal life being discernible during this period; but when we come to the New Red Sandstone we find novel

and superior forms of plant and animal life appear, though the greatest and most marked departure occurred in the Oolitic age, when, for the first time, insects are brought upon the scene, and such extraordinary reptiles as the Saurians, or lizard family.

Of these saurians that curiously-formed creature known as the Ichthyosaurus is well worth a passing notice. This gigantic saurian had the backbone of a fish, the long tail of a crocodile, the snout of a porpoise, the head of a lizard, with a large number of strong teeth, large eyes, and the paddles of a whale, which enabled it to propel itself rapidly through the water. The remains of these creatures show that they varied between twenty and thirty feet in length. Later, we find what are called land or crocodile lizards, such as the Megalosaurus and the Pterodactyle, or Flying Dragon.

According to Dr. Buckland, in this age are to be found on the surface of slabs, of calcareous grit and stonified slate, "perfectly preserved, petrified castings of marine worms;" and, though traces of the footprints of animals may be found on the surfaces of these rocks, there are no indications during this period of the existence of man. By reference to these footprints the existence of birds at this early period of the world's history has been pretty well established; and it is probable that a gigantic kind of gallinaceous bird, larger even than the ostrich, waddled about the earth, to the danger, perhaps, of birds of smaller size.

Rock salt is found in the Triassic age, and on the top of the Oolite formation are found innumerable beds of what is familiarly known as limestone in some parts of England and Germany, several hundreds of feet in thickness. Professor Huxley and other well-known scientists consider the formation of this substance due mainly to the "siliceous coverings of animalcules;" the remains of some of which animals have been discovered in these beds.

But we must pass rapidly on, and come to the Tertiary system. In this age we come across great rock formations such as the Tripoli, now believed to be composed exclusively of the solid remains of animalcules, so minute in structure as to be imperceptible to the human eye without the aid of a microscope. We are now introduced to several orders of reptiles, such as the Chelonia (tortoises),

Crocodilia and Batrachia (frogs), and birds of the genera, represented by the owl, woodcock, quail, etc. ; while among the quadrupeds were the Palæotherium, the Glyptodon (a sort of armadillo), and the Anoplotheria, in addition to certain of the wolf, fox, racoon, doormouse, and squirrel tribes.

In what is termed the Miocene period of the Tertiary formation are found the remains of the gigantic Dinotherium and of the Hippotherium, an animal allied to the horse, hogs, cats, and animals, bearing resemblance to the tiger, the dog, and bear ; while the sea was alive with marine mammalia, such as whales, seals, dolphins, and so on.

Characterising the Pliocene age, which is again divided into two periods, we find the remains of Pachydermatous families, such as the mammoth, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, take the place of the extinct thick-skinned animals before mentioned, and traces appear of the existence of some ruminants, such as oxen, deer, and camels. It has now been established that the great Mastadon, a skeleton of which was dug out of the earth in America so recently as 1801, belongs to this period ; as does also the Megatherium, a huge creature, slow in movement, and larger somewhat than the common ox, with tremendous toes and claws ; while, in the second half of this period, a number of animals have been discovered similar to species now existing ; and from this period downwards progress towards the present types of the animal world becomes more and more manifest.

Now, if the earth has existed only some six thousand years, and if, as Genesis states, everything was created within six days, how is it that the remains of animals, of various stages of growth or development, are to be found thus embedded in the rocks ? How is it that the Bible makes no mention of the extraordinary creatures named, the ancestors of the animals now existing on the earth ? Besides, if we would study aright the age of the earth, we must not fail to take into account the important discovery of William Pengelly in Kent's Cavern. "We know," says this scientist, in his lecture on "The Time that has Elapsed Since the Era of the Cave Men of Devonshire," "that in Kent's Cavern there are inscriptions on the granular stalagmite ; and we know

further that the lines of drainage of the cavern have not changed. Now, if it has taken 250 years to form the twentieth of an inch in thickness in a part of a cavern where the stalagmite has been formed with unusual rapidity, judging from these bosses, you perceive clearly enough that it would take twenty times that amount of time at that rate to represent an inch—that is, 5,000 years, and we have fully five feet to account for in the granular stalagmite only. Now, ladies and gentlemen, are you prepared for that amount of time? Five thousand years for an inch, and sixty inches—sixty times five thousand years!"

Dealing with the Palæontological evidence, the same authority enumerates the kind of animals found in the earth. They were "the cave lion, felis of the size of the lynx, wild cat, cave hyena, wolf, fox, canis vulpes var spelæus, canis of the size of isatis, glutton, badger, cave bear, grizzly bear, brown bear, mammoth, rhinoceros, tichorhinus, horse, urus or wild bull, bison, 'irish elk,' red deer, reindeer, hare, lagomys spelæus, water vole, field vole, bank vole, arvicola gulielmi, beaver, and machairodus latideus." Here we have three groups of animals—many extinct; some, though not extinct, only to be found on the continent, and others, such as the fox and the hare, still existing in Great Britain.

Biological research proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that man's existence on the earth dates not 5,000, nor 50,000, but probably hundreds of thousands of years, and Karl Vogt, the great German scientist, goes as far as saying that "there is no longer any doubt that man existed in Europe—probably the latest peopled part of the world—at a time when the great southern animals—the elephant, mammoth, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus—were found there. Even when no human remains or tools have been found the acute researches of Steenstrap have found traces of man by distinguishing the bones, which have been gnawed by animals from those which show signs of having been split by man for the sake of the marrow, or otherwise handled by him" (*Anthropological Review*, page 219); a statement corroborated by Sir Charles Lyell in his "Antiquity of Man," page 204, and also maintained by Professor Huxley and other leading scientists of the day.

It is of no avail for theologians to declare that the

passages in the first chapter of Genesis are susceptible of bearing the interpretation that ages elapsed between the creation of the vegetable kingdom and man. The Bible says that the evening and the morning was "the first day," and we refuse to confuse ourselves and others over the meaning of a verse which ought to be clear to every person possessing only a grain of common sense. This portion of my subject I close with a quotation from the late Bishop Colenso, with which I entirely agree. He says: "We have thus seen that in Genesis i., if regarded as statements of historical matter of fact, are directly at variance with some of the plainest facts of natural science, as they are now brought home, by the extension of education, to every village, almost we might say to every cottage in the land. It is idle for any minister of religion to attempt to disguise this palpable discordance. To do this is only to put a stumbling block in the way of the young—at all events of those of the next generation—who well instructed themselves in these things, and, having their eyes open to the real facts of the case, may be expected either to despise such a teacher as ignorant, or to suspect him as dishonest, and in either case would be very little likely to attach much weight to his instructions in things of highest moment" (Bishop Colenso, in "Examination of Pentateuch," page 324). But, if we turn our attention from the narrow and puerile view of the Bible to the large and comprehensive view of science, we shall find that the universe is in reality the one great open book—a revelation to man just up to the measure of his capability of reading and understanding it. The diligent and earnest student of Nature day by day grasps some new fact, and, speculating upon its value, opens up new mines of thought for future exploration. It is worthy of remark, too, that Nature is a book that is open to all peoples; it recognises no distinction of colour, or nationality, or sex; it is free to impart its wonders to all who are prepared to read its ever-unfolding pages. Better far than any revelation contained in the numerous bibles of the earth; for these, though containing the best guesses at truth that man could make in past ages of ignorance, could not in their very nature contain an infallible record of Nature's final words to man. Never for a moment silent, this universe, in its ceaseless changes, is ever ready to deliver its message to whosoever is

willing to receive it—a message that is exactly suitable to the progressive nature of man ; it is delivered, not all at once, but in piecemeal ; for, as man is incapable of grasping or understanding all the truths of Nature at once, she is slow and persistent in the gradual but everlasting unfolding of her wondrous book.

These natural revelations, moreover, are never finished. The knowledge of one age becomes the ignorance of the next, as surely as the heresy of to-day will become the orthodoxy of to-morrow ; for, with an ever-widening grasp of facts, the half-truth that was known yesterday will bear a new meaning in the light of the additional half that has been discovered to-day. Well, indeed, is it for man that he acquires his knowledge thus by small, but never-ending, instalments. Just as a story loses its charm to the reader the moment the plot is disclosed, or interest wanes as the reader can, with some degree of certainty, predict the course of events as they are likely to affect the hero or heroine, so life would lose its charm, its chief source of happiness, its motive-power, if man could interpret now for all time the meaning of Nature's wonders. Fortunately for man, such knowledge is not possible. Could he live for a thousand years, there would always be some fresh lessons for him to learn ; and, though there is a limit to his power of grasping the meaning of Nature's truths, the facts within his reach are so numerous that he need never seek in vain. Not by spasmodic effort, nor by any series of such efforts, can he encompass all truth that to him is knowable. Only by ceaseless accumulation of facts, only by a careful classification of those facts, only by well-reasoned deductions, can man hope to understand their real significance. As the great mountains of the earth are but the deposits, through thousands of ages, of small particles of matter that, from their inherent properties, have thus been drawn together, so is the knowledge of man : every moment there is a fresh deposit of facts for him who will study, and the great accumulations of the past make up the sum of man's knowledge to-day. The universe is a great panorama ; it is continually unfolding new pictures to satisfy our mental cravings, and this unfolding seems likely to go on forever.

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MAN AND THE LOWER ANIMALS.

CONSPICUOUS among the many errors which have retarded the progress of man is his pious and conceited idea of himself as a spiritual and supernatural being entirely separated from the lower animals. This vain egotism has blunted him to truth, has led him into the pursuit of delusions and insanities, and made him persecute and despise the seekers and promulgators of that knowledge without which all efforts to improve the condition of mankind are but blind thrustings of the blind, into ever gaping abysses of misery. A true perception of man's close relationship to those fellow creatures he has hitherto so despised will clear his mind of a vast amount of ignorant pride and pernicious vanity, and will make him regard inferior beings with more kind and sympathetic feelings than hitherto. The pitiful but entirely mischievous theology and spiritualism founded on human pretensions will disappear as man recognises his true position in nature and his fellowship with all living things.

In all nations of the earth the delusion appears to prevail that man is a special creation: that he differs altogether from the lower animals. Even the naked, unclean, unvarnished savage, with no idea of justice, and cruel to the last degree, vainly imagines himself immeasurably superior to the highest among the so-called brute creation. What these creatures think of him we have no means of knowing. They have not yet betaken themselves to the task of writing books, but if some of their facial expressions may be taken as indicating their views I should be inclined to think that their opinions of him were not altogether favorable or complimentary.

In Europe the belief that man is a special creation, and widely different from the lower animals in various ways, is no doubt due to the influence of the teachings of the

Bible that man was made in the image of God, and that deity "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul".

Some theologians argue that had not God infused this "living soul" into man he would have been an animal and nothing more. Death would then have been the termination of his career. But the immortal essence having been breathed into him by his maker, made all the difference. Hereafter he became allied to God, and above and away from the rest of animated existence. Some Christian divines have gone as far as saying that, as God only breathed into man the "breath of life", there was no evidence that woman possessed the immortal essence, and so far as they knew there was no reasonable ground for believing that woman was immortal.

Scientific men—some even of great eminence—when the Church was strong, sought to help the theologian by attempting to prove that man was different anatomically from the lower animals. Blumenbach and Cuvier held that man was the only animal that had two hands, while Professor Owen went so far as to assert that man possessed certain marked characteristics which constitute a third lobe of the brain, and which he alleged was deficient in all other animals.

Professor Owen's words were:

"In man, the brain presents an ascensive step in development, higher and more strongly marked than that by which the preceding class was distinguished from the one below it. Not only do the cerebral hemispheres overlap the olfactory lobes and cerebellum, but they extend in advance of the one and further back than the other. Their posterior development is so marked, that anatomists have assigned to that part the character of a third lobe; it is peculiar to the Genus Homo, and equally peculiar is the posterior horn of the lateral ventricle and the 'hippocampus minor', which characterize the hind lobe of each hemisphere. Peculiar mental powers are associated with this highest form of the brain, and their consequences wonderfully illustrate the value of the cerebral character, according to my estimate of which I am led to regard the Genus Homo as not merely a representative of a distinct order but of a distinct sub-class of mammalia, for which I propose the name of Archi-encephala." (From paper read by Professor Owen before the Linnean Society, April 21st, 1857.)¹

¹ It is due to Professor Owen to say that he has recently modified his view on the subject.

Professor Huxley has, however, demonstrated that the third lobe is not peculiar to man, but exists in all higher quadrumana, and further, that all the peculiar characteristics mentioned by Owen are to be found in the higher apes, such for instance as the chimpanzee and the orang-outang.

Notwithstanding the fact that no special characteristics can be shown to belong to man to which corresponding ones may not be found in the lower animals, there are many arrogant persons who still maintain that man is a special creation.

With a fervor which ignorance of facts and a blind adherence to religious superstition alone can yield, they strenuously deny that man is an evolution from lower organisms. Of course they offer no evidence to the contrary. No proof seems to them to be necessary. The Bible statement that "God made man in his own image" is all-sufficient.

While in this intellectually self-satisfied condition, it is useless to argue with them. To those, however, whose minds are unprejudiced, a few facts bearing on this question of the relation of man to the lower animals cannot be altogether unimportant.

In the first place, then, there are many analogies and affinities of structure connecting man with the lower animals.

No one will deny that man takes his origin from an ovum similar in size and form to that from which the dog or the rabbit emerges. Nor will it be disputed that the analogy holds good in regard to the physical process which determines the development through successive stages of the embryo in the ovum; or of the manner in which the human foetus is nourished until the moment of birth. All this will be at once admitted. Further, it can be shown that all the bones in the skeleton of man resemble more or less closely those of animals belonging to the class called mammalia, as well as the muscles, the great vessels, and the viscera.

Then, too, man is liable to receive from, and communicate to, the lower animals such diseases as glanders, syphilis, hydrophobia. He is infested, like them, with internal parasites which prey upon the liver and intestines;

while drugs and spirituous liquors have precisely the same effect upon both.

Such qualities as love and hate are traceable very far down in the animal world. Dogs, cats, elephants, etc., not only manifest these qualities, but are capable of displaying deep feelings of sorrow, etc.; nor do I think it can be doubted that these and other animals manifest in their conduct the evidence of having consciously reasoned before the performance of certain acts.

These, then, are some of the striking resemblances which show at least that there is a general plan in the structure and functions of animals, which reaches right up to man.

As far back as 1796 Goethe recognised this, and said:—

“This also we have gained. We were able, unreservedly, to affirm that the more perfect organic natures, under which we include pisces, amphibia, aves, mammalia, and, at the head of these last, man, have all been formed on one original plan that is only slightly modified in its very constant details here and there, and is still improving and altering generation after generation.”

In his “Origin of Species”, Darwin traces all the modifications in the structure and functions of animals to physical and chemical causes, as distinguished from any special creative act. These changes the great naturalist attributed to natural selection. Even the most superficial student of nature must now be aware that there are more living forms brought into existence than can possibly obtain the means of subsistence. Nature, therefore, unconsciously selects those best adapted to their surroundings, and weeds out the weak, and those otherwise unsuited to their circumstances, the struggle for existence being usually severest among animals and plants of the same or allied species, where the power of increase is the greatest. Whether this great modern theory of natural selection covers and explains the whole of the facts, we cannot now stop to inquire. Let us, however, consider some of the facts, and try to understand them in the light of the theory of Evolution.

With the facts that in his manner of origination, in his anatomical structure, in his capability of receiving and communicating diseases, in his liability to be preyed upon internally by parasites, in his inheritance of certain predispositions, there is without doubt *prima facie* evidence that

man is *an animal* among animals, and, however far removed in some respects, is bound to them by the indissoluble tie of relationship. Turn now to another aspect of this subject. Take the brain. In Europe the average weight of the human male brain is $49\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; of the female 44 oz. On examination it has been found that the European brain is on an average larger than that of other nations; thus it has been ascertained that the mean internal capacity of European skulls is 92.3 cubic inches; of Americans, 87.5; of Asiatics, 87.1; and of Australians 81.9.¹ From this it will be seen that those races lowest down in the scale of human development or nearest barbarism possess brains smaller in size than those higher up the scale towards civilisation. That the weight of a human brain in a large degree indicates the intellectual power of its possessor, seems established by the fact that men of great genius have, with few exceptions, been men of large brains. Shakspeare, Newton, Cuvier, and Napoleon each possessed brains weighing over 60 oz. Schiller, the Poet's brain, weighed 63 oz.; Daniel Webster, the Statesman's, 53.5 oz.; Lord Campbell, the Lord Chancellor's, 53.5 oz.; Agassiz, the Naturalist's, 53.3 oz.²

And it is a remarkable fact that the difference of cranial capacity in the sexes, as mentioned above, increases with the development of the race, so that there is a greater difference in the brain-weight of the more civilised races than, for instance, in the negro and the negress, and in other uncivilised peoples.

Quoting from Carl Vogt, Bastian transcribes the following remarks in explanation of this above fact:

"The lower the state of culture, the more similar are the occupations of the two sexes. Among the Australians, the Bushmen, and other low races, possessing no fixed habitations, the wife partakes of all her husband's toil, and has in addition the care of the progeny. The sphere of occupation is the same for both sexes, whilst among the civilised there is a difference both in physical and mental labor. If it be true that every organ is strengthened by exercise, increasing in size and weight, it must equally apply to the brain, which must become more developed by proper mental exercise."

Many anatomists have declared—and experience verifies

¹ Darwin: "Descent of Man," page 54.

² Bastian: "The Brain as an Organ of Mind," page 370.

their statement—that there is a gradual scale of development in the angle of the head from the bird up to man.

Pritchard¹ says:

“Camper was the first anatomist who attempted to distinguish and describe in an accurate manner the differences of form which have been discovered on comparing the skulls of different human races. This writer invented a technical method by which he imagined that he could display in a single measurement the essential difference of skulls as to form capacity, not only in reference to various races of men, but likewise as to the inferior species of animals. His own account of this method is as follows:

“The basis on which the distinctions of nations is founded may be displayed by two straight lines, one of which is to be drawn through the *meatus auditorius* to the base of the nose, and the other touching the prominent centre of the forehead and falling thence on the most advancing part of the upper jawbone, the head being viewed in profile. In the angle produced by these two lines may be said to consist not only the distinctions between the skulls of the several species of animals, but also those which are found to exist between different nations; and it might be concluded that Nature has availed herself at the same time of this angle to mark out the diversities of the animal kingdom, and to establish a sort of scale from the inferior tribes up to the most beautiful forms which are found in the human species. Thus it will be found that the heads of birds display the smallest angle, and that it always becomes of greater extent in proportion as the animal approaches more nearly to the human figure. Thus there is one species of the ape tribe in which the head has a facial angle of forty-two degrees; in another animal of the same family, which is one of those *Simiæ* most approaching in figure to mankind, the facial angle contains exactly fifty degrees. Next to this is the head of the African negro, which, as well as that of the Kalmuck, forms an angle of seventy degrees; while the angle discovered in the heads of Europeans contains eighty degrees. On this difference of ten degrees in the facial angle the superior beauty of the European depends; while that high character of sublime beauty which is so striking in some works of ancient statuary, as in the head of Apollo and in the Medusa of Sisocles, is given by the angle, which amounts to one hundred degrees.”

From the average of 49½ oz. in brain-weight of human beings there are great divergences, some going as high as 65 oz., others as low as 20 oz. Invariably, however, when

¹ “Natural History of Man,” page 110.

the brain-weight falls below 25 oz., the individual is an idiot. The anatomist Gore weighed the brain of an idiot aged 42, that weighed only 10 oz.; Tiedeman that of an idiot aged 16, that weighed 19.9 oz.; Marshall that of an idiot aged 12, that weighed only 8.5 oz.¹

Now the meaning of all this should be plain enough to the most ordinary understanding. It means, in short, that the size and weight of the brain are good indications of the capacity of the individual; that just as in proportion to the muscular development and potential force of the physically-developed man or animal is his capacity for exerting great physical force, so in proportion to the weight and size, shape, and structure of the brain of men and animals, are their powers of displaying intelligence.

One other fact in regard to the brain must also be considered. It is this: Brain-power is due, no doubt, in no inconsiderable degree, to inherited qualities. The quality of men's brains, independently of size and weight, differs materially. In some the convolutions are well marked and deep with *sulci*; in others it is quite the contrary. Why this is so cannot always be determined. But in cases where men of extraordinary mental power have been found upon examination to possess brains rather below than above the ordinary average, the deficiency in size and weight has been more than compensated for by the asymmetrical, or irregular, and numerous convolutions it has been found to possess. Thus far, then, we can see that there is a considerable falling off in brain-weight and intellectual power as we descend the scale from the civilised to the barbarous, and from the barbarous to the idiotic. And it is a fact worth pondering that there is more difference between the highest and the lowest man, in the size, weight, and quality of the brain, and in the manifestation of its power, than between the lowest man and the highest ape. For while the brain-weight of the highest man is 1,900 cubic centimetres and that of the lowest man 1,200 cubic centimetres—a difference of 700 cubic centimetres—the difference between the lowest man and the highest ape is only 600 cubic centimetres, a difference that is worthy of serious consideration.²

¹ See Bastian's "Brain as an Organ of Mind," page 365.

² *Ibid.*, page 353.

Reason is the highest faculty of man. It is a combination of intellectual qualities. It implies the powers of perception, attention, memory, arrangement of perceptions or classification, imagination, and judgment, by this latter forming deductions from remembered perceptions.

Numerous indeed are the animals that we know to be capable of perceiving and retaining their perceptions. All mammals possess these qualities. Even birds and insects possess them. Dogs, cats, horses, elephants, monkeys, apes, not only possess them, but others also of a far higher character. Some insects we know to display a high degree of intelligence, but others do not. What a wonderful creature for instance is the ant; in proportion to its size how superior to some men! The nervous ganglia of a worker-ant is even more wonderful than the brain of man. Yet just as the common name *man* is given alike to a Shakspeare and to a savage, even so the name *insect* is given to the ant as well as to the coccus.

Observe the wise remarks of Darwin on this head:

"A difference of degree," he says ("Descent of Man," page 147), "however great, does not justify us in placing man in a different kingdom, as will be best illustrated by comparing the mental powers of two insects, namely a coccus and an ant, which undoubtedly belong to the same class. The difference is here greater than, though of a somewhat different kind from, that between man and the highest mammal. The female coccus, whilst young, attaches itself by its proboscis to a plant, and sucks the sap, but never moves again; is fertilised and lays eggs, and this is its whole history. On the other hand, to describe the habits and mental powers of the worker ant would require a large volume. I may, however, briefly specify a few points. Ants certainly communicate information to each other, and several unite for the same work or games of play. They recognise their fellow ants after months of absence, and feel sympathy for each other. They build great edifices, keep them clean, close the doors in the evening, and post sentries. They make roads, as well as tunnels under rivers, and temporary bridges over them by clinging together. They collect food for the community, and when an object too large for entrance is brought to the nest they enlarge the door and afterwards build it up again. They store up seeds, of which they prevent the germination, and which, if damp, are brought up to the surface to dry. They keep aphides and other insects as milch cows, etc."

Attention is a faculty of first-rate importance to all in-

telligent animals. Animals possessing this faculty may be said to be the only creatures that exercise the complex qualities which go to make up what we call mind.

Cats and dogs have excellent memories. How many wonderful stories have we all heard respecting dogs that have been taken by train many miles away from home, but have returned in a few days? A dog never forgets a good master. The retentive memory of elephants is proverbial. Every school-boy has read of the elephant who one day having received a prick on his trunk from a needle by a tailor, waited patiently for the hour of revenge and then deluged him with dirty water in payment for his cruel treatment. Monkeys also have good memories. You may play many a practical joke on young and inexperienced monkeys, but the older ones cannot be so easily deceived. Imagination, without doubt, is one of the highest faculties in the rational animal. It is of course very difficult to know whether the lower animals possess the power of imagination in the same sense as man. Some small indication of the possession of this attribute, however, has been noted by close observers. Many animals, we have reason to believe, dream. They make peculiar noises in their sleep, and exhibit all the symptoms of dreaming. What are dreams but the exercise of the imaginative faculty? Dogs especially display these symptoms. And besides all this, is not the imitative faculty one of the most important in all intelligent creatures? Monkeys and apes reason imperfectly—imitation is their most perfectly developed quality.

The child begins where the ape leaves off. Children are largely imitative in all but their reflex actions; but the child develops into the rational being; the idiot, on the contrary, never seems to get beyond the imitative stage.

It is often said that one of the chief distinctions between man and the lower animals is that the former possesses the faculty of expressing his thoughts and feeling through the medium of language, which the latter lacks. Few, however, will go as far as declaring that animals are without the power of expressing their emotions by sounds which are well understood, and which to them serve all the purposes of a language. Monkeys communicate their thoughts to one another, and many of their gestures are understood by men. According to Darwin dogs, since they

have been domesticated, have acquired the art of barking in several distinct tones,¹ and he gives the following description of them :—

"We have the bark of eagerness, as in the chase; that of anger, as well as growling; the yelp, or howl of despair, as when shut up; the baying at night; the bark of joy as when started on a walk with his master; and the very distinct one of demand or supplication, as when wishing for a door or window to be open."

Parrots, as we all know, talk, and in some degree connect words with things and persons with events.

To show that bees have the power of conveying their thoughts, Büchner says :—²

"Dujardin placed a saucer with sugar in a niche of a wall a considerable distance from a beehive. A single bee happening to discover this treasure was seen repeatedly to fly about the margin of the niche, and to touch them with the head in order to remember the locality. It then flew away, and returned shortly after accompanied by a number of friends who quickly consumed the sugar. Had not these animals spoken to each other?"

Upon careful examination it has been found that many animals possess well marked social instincts, and Darwin was of opinion that it was highly probable that such animals as were endowed with these qualities "would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well or nearly as well developed as in man".³

But it may be said that all these in animals are purely instinctive; not however meaning that they are transmitted qualities, but that they are qualities bestowed upon all animals at their creation by deity in lieu of reason.

Man, it has been further declared, is the only creature endowed with reason and free will. All animals act from necessity; man alone is a free agent. Let us consider these points.

First as to instinct and reason. There is very little reason to doubt that at bottom instinct and reason are the

¹ "Descent of Man," p. 85.

² "Matter and Force," p. 260.

³ "Descent of Man," p. 98.

same. Instinct is a low form of reason transmitted as a fixed quality in all animals; reason, on the other hand, is developed instinct. Between instinct and reason there is no difference in kind—the difference is one of degree only.

As to the cause of the development of instinct in animals and man, and its relation to what is called reason, it were well perhaps that I should bring forward a few scientific authorities in support of the position that I maintain; for after all my purpose is not so much to give my own opinion on these subjects as to show what great scientists and able thinkers have to say concerning them. Take Haeckel's view of the origin of instinct in animals. He says ("Pedigree of Man," page 97; Lecture, "The Division of Labor"):

"There is a belief that the word instinct is an explanation—(of certain phenomena exhibited by the lower animals). Few words have led to so vague, so perverted a conception of a vast domain of momentous phenomena as this word 'instinct'. When the word is used, the notion is that every kind of animal was by a single act of creation sent into the world with a definite sum of impulses and faculties; that it had a special mode of existence marked out for it by its creator, a sort of inexorable law of life; and that it must live after this rigidly, unalterably. Nothing is more erroneous, more opposed to the truth, than this widespread idea. Just as the individual species of animals have not been created as they now are, so their special instincts, the mental stock-in-trade of the species, have not been thus created. They have evolved from one common fundamental condition by division of labor in the central nervous system of the different species of animals as their whole organisation has evolved."

Why should we apply the name instinct to the rational actions of animals and reason to the same class of actions in the lower forms of men?

"With equal justice", says Haeckel, "must we call it 'blind instinct' when the Eskimos make their tents of reindeer skins, the North American Indians theirs of buffalo hides, the redskins of Brazil theirs of palm-branches and the leaves of the banana. We must in like fashion call it 'blind instinct' that the peoples of Europe with a single exception have retained the monarchical form of Government, like the bees; and that the peoples of America again, with a single exception, have preferred the republican form of government, like the ants."

Büchner says ("Force and Matter," p. 255):

"Man has no absolute advantage above the animal, his mental superiority being merely relative. There is not one intellectual faculty which belongs to man exclusively; his superiority is merely the result of the greater intensity and the proper combination of his capacities."

Dr. Hooker, writing on elephants, says:

"The docility of these animals has been known for ages, but loses so much by mere description that their mildness, obedience, and intelligence appeared to me as surprising as if I had never heard of it. Our elephant was so docile that on demand he picked up stones with his trunk and, reaching them to his master, saved him in his geological excursions the trouble of alighting."

Büchner asks ("Force and Matter," p. 259):

"Does not the crétin, who is certainly a man, stand below the brute? At what distance finally stands the negro from the ape? The author saw in the Zoological Gardens at Antwerp an ape who had a complete bed in his cage, into which he placed himself at night, covering himself up like a man. He performed tricks with hoops and balls, turning all the while towards the spectators, as if he were anxious to show them his arts. He also followed with his fingers the shadows which he cast on the wall. The exhibition produced a sad impression, as one could not divest oneself of the feeling that a kind of human, reflecting, sensitive being was caged there. On the other hand, the negro, according to the excellent description of Burmeister, forcibly reminds us of the ape, both in his physical and mental aspect. We find there the same impulse of imitation, the same cowardice, in short all its characteristic peculiarities."

Professor Büchner quotes from Hope's Essay on the Origin of Man the following interesting passage:

"In the wildernesses of Borneo and Sumatra and the Polynesian islands there are hordes of savages, whose resemblance to the baboon is striking, and whose physical and mental superiority above the brute is scarcely perceptible. They possess little memory, and still less imagination. They appear incapable of reflecting on the past, or to provide for the future; nothing but hunger disturbs his apathy. No other mental capacity can be discovered in them, but that low brutish cunning ascribed to the apes."

Do not animals reason? Did not the swallow reason, who, on finding her nest occupied by a sparrow on her return in spring, revenged herself on the usurper by walling

up the fly-hole? Does not the old partridge reason, which, in its endeavor to preserve its young from the cruel clutches of nest-thieves, flies close to the ground, causing it to be pursued in preference to its young? Do not cats reason? I have myself frequently observed a cat outside a window through which she could see a canary, quietly waiting for the opportunity to arise, when she might seize the poor bird. If the cat cannot reason, why, when she has put her paw against the window pane and to all appearance has touched the bird, does she not imagine she has got it and make her escape? Cats have been known to wait patiently for hours round a corner near a hole down which a rat has escaped. Is it instinct or reason that informs the cat that if she stands immediately over the hole, the rat is not likely to make its appearance? Do monkeys reason when they learn to perform tricks, and imitate the actions of human beings; or are their actions instinctive—implanted in them by deity when the first monkey was created?

Instinct, to be of any value as divine guidance, should be unerring in its promptings. Yet the alleged instinctive actions of animals frequently lead them into errors. Instinct sometimes prompts animals to eat that which destroys them. Besides, instinct is a changeable quality. Dr. F. C. Noll (see Büchner's "Mind in Animals") gives us an account of a parrot, a native of the New Zealand Alps, which, having lived on berries, flowers, and insects for a considerable time, took a fancy to flesh food, and enjoyed the change so much as to adhere to it. Sheep are often destroyed by eating poisonous plants. How is this, if they possess an unerring instinct?

Let us now proceed to the consideration of the next point. It is said that "animals act from necessity; man is the only free agent". By this is meant that man is the only being possessing a free will, and that hence he is the only responsible being. In the first place, I deny that man has a free will, and if his faculty of balancing rival attractions and choosing be regarded as free will, then animals possess it likewise; and in the second, I say that many animals have a sense of social duty, and that man holds all domestic animals responsible, up to a certain degree, for their actions. A dog who should steal meat intended for household consumption would, in nine cases

out of ten, be subjected to some kind of punishment. What right has man to punish a dog if the dog is an irresponsible creature, and is not influenced in its conduct by punishment? Punishments and rewards act upon animals and man alike, and influence their conduct.

Take the question of man's alleged freedom of will. When man wills to take one course of action in preference to another, he is always induced to do so from the motive strongest in his mind at the moment immediately before the action. Even his choice is not free. He cannot choose to love or hate just as he pleases. An object which excites in him a pleasant sensation he cannot (so far) hate; nor can he love that which excites contrary feelings in his bosom. His actions in many cases will follow necessarily from his belief, whether that belief be true or false. Nor is he free to believe what he likes. His belief will be, in a well-trained mind, the result of the examination of evidence. His action will be the result of all his past experience up to the moment of volition. Moreover, it is admitted that in regard to physical phenomena, every event is preceded by some other event or events without which it could not happen, and without which it is bound to happen. Does not the same law of necessity apply to mental phenomena, which, after all, at bottom are physical? If, as a last resource, it is said that man is the only animal possessing an immortal soul, some definition of the meaning to be attached to the word "soul" will be required.

In my essay on "Brain and Soul", I have dealt at some length with this question, and have argued that if the soul is what is also described in man as *mind*, I see no more reason for the immortality of this element in man than for the like element in certain animals.

If, however, the reader supposes that in this essay there is an attempt to degrade man to "the level of the brute", he is much mistaken. Man is in many respects greatly superior to the highest among the lower animals. His intelligence, though the same in kind, as I have shown, is immensely superior to that of other mammals. As a moral creature he stands on an elevation far above all other animals. He alone can fully recognise that his conduct has reference to the well-being of the community. He cannot sin against his fellow-man without injuring himself. The happiness of the individual is thus inextricably bound

up with the happiness of the community in which he lives. Man therefore stands at the head of the animated kingdom. This does not seem to me a degrading view of man's place in nature, but a true view. Man is not degraded to the level of the lower animals, but the lower animals are elevated from a false position, and placed in that relation to the highest animal which a profound study of biology reveals to be true.

Without doubt man's history has, on the whole, been one of progress. Though he is capable of doing much that is evil, if wrongly instructed or badly trained, he is also capable, under propitious circumstances and wise training, of much that is noble and good; and it is a libel upon the best characters with whose careers history has furnished us to say that man is "inherently depraved" or in any sense a fallen creature. There are good grounds for believing that man has never, in the whole history of the world, held so lofty a position in the animated kingdom as he does to-day. And if he is to maintain, nay, to improve his position, such progress as may be open to him can only come by a close and unremitting application to the study of nature, and to a diligent and vigorous continuation of the work of the world—which work experience proves has been so fruitful in the past of good results.

By diverting the course of the destructive forces in nature, or by utilising them by studying science, by improving our arts, and, above all, by diligent productive labor—by these means what was once a wide waste of rough earth has been converted into a comparatively comfortable habitation for the sons of men.

All labor means some pain, but difficult as it is at times—thwarted as it often will be—that work must go on; the courageous must triumph in the end. Carlyle says nobly: "All work of man's is as the swimmer's; the vast ocean threatens to devour him. If he front it not bravely it will keep its word. By incessant, wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold! it bears him as its conqueror along."

DESIGN
AND
NATURAL SELECTION.

BY
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DESIGN AND NATURAL SELECTION.

IN a very early stage of his intellectual advancement the idea must have occurred to man that, if God was the author of everything in the universe, every creature, from the monad up to man, and every faculty they possessed, must have been designed by the omnipotent and all-wise ruler of the universe for some special and wise purpose. It would be difficult to determine the exact age of this argument, or who among the ancient philosophers put it forth with the greatest clearness and force. Certain it is, however, that it may be found among the writings of Plato and other Greek philosophers, and that it has been presented through many centuries under various guises.

Since the conflict between reasoners who have argued for a Materialistic basis for all phenomena and those who have taken the Spiritualistic, or Dualistic, view, the Design argument has had a prominent place in all important disputations on the existence of Deity. No one, I think, will deny that, so far as this argument is concerned, its great popularity in Europe has been due to the excellent way in which it has been supported by the memorable illustrations of Dr. Paley, from which it was sought to demonstrate an exact analogy between the watch and its maker and the universe and its supposed author. Even according to the early belief of Darwin himself, there was nothing inconsistent in the ideas of Natural Selection and Design. God might have designed the universe, the naturalist affirmed, and have imparted to it the potentialities from which all

forms of life have since sprung. In that case, Natural Selection would be but the working-out of God's plan or design. A little thought, however, will be sufficient to convince us that, in this, the great naturalist has misunderstood the argument as it is presented by the theologian ; for, according to all Theistic reasoners, up to within the last few years, when they have been compelled to accept the doctrine of Evolution or be considered unworthy of the consideration of scientific or thoughtful men, God designed things just as we find them to-day—civilised man, with good eyes and perfect frame ; that he did not design an animal or a variety of animals, and allow a number of other animals to be developed from them that are now considered distinct species, but that he created the variety of existing creatures just as we find them to-day in the various countries of the world.

Before we consider the value of the Design argument, it is worthy of notice that, coming as it does distinctly under the head of arguments of the mode *à posteriori*, it must be acknowledged to be a purely scientific argument. In answer to the question, "To what class of inductive arguments does this one—from marks of design in nature—belong?" Mr. Mill answers : "The species of inductive arguments are four in number, corresponding to the four inductive methods—the methods of agreement, of difference, of residues, and of concomitant variations. The argument under consideration falls within the first of these divisions, the method of agreement. This is, for reasons known to inductive logicians, the weakest of the four ; but the particular argument is a strong one of its kind." Now, my own opinion is that Mr. Mill attached to the Design argument greater value than it really deserved. The point upon which he laid much stress was the improbability of the principle of the survival of the fittest "being sufficient to account for the degree of perfection found in some of the organs of man—such, for instance, as the eye ;" but even

this hypothesis he did not think so absurd as many suppose. It would, he says, "require us, for example, to suppose that the primæval animal, of whatever nature it may have been, could not see, and had, at most, such slight preparation for seeing as might be constituted by some chemical action of light upon its cellular structure. One of the accidental variations which are liable to take place in all organic beings would, at some time or other, produce a variety that could see in some imperfect manner; and, this peculiarity being transmitted by inheritance while other variations continued to take place in other directions, a number of races would be produced who, by the power of even imperfect sight, would have a great advantage over all other creatures which could not see, and would, in time, extirpate them from all places, except, perhaps, a few very peculiar situations underground. Fresh variations supervening would give rise to races with better and better seeing powers, until we might, at last, reach as extraordinary a combination of structures and functions as is seen in the eye of man and of the more important animals. Of this theory, when pushed to this extreme point, all that can now be said is that it is not so absurd as it looks, and that the analogies which have been discovered in experience favourable to its possibility far exceed what any one could have supposed beforehand. Whether it will ever be possible to say more than this is, at present, uncertain." Upon this very point modern evolutionists—especially Haeckel—have been very definite that there is an overwhelming amount of evidence to demonstrate that functions precede organs, and that some animals now exist that see without organs, or that they are conscious of the presence of light or of some distinct object.

Our concern now is the value of the Design argument in itself. What is it? It is affirmed, in the first instance, that Nature manifests marks of design as a whole, or in objects taken by themselves; that it is inconceivable that these manifestations could have been brought about by any

number of haphazard occurrences, or by occurrences that have happened by virtue of the inherent properties of bodies—indeed, that these manifestations carry with them the evidence of having been produced by some intelligent agent behind phenomena, which Theists unanimously proclaim is God. An illustration is given. For instance, it is said: “Here is a watch: obviously that watch did not make itself. Mechanism of so complicated and delicate a nature could not possibly have so arranged itself without the aid of an intelligent person behind it. If that is admitted, then it is acknowledged that watches are made, that they are constructed by intelligent persons. If a watch, it is then argued, requires an intelligent person to make it, how much more does the universe, infinitely more complicated and admirable in its working, require an intelligent creator to produce it?” Or, to take another familiar illustration: “Look at the human eye. See what a delicate and beautiful organ it is—how admirably adapted for the purpose of seeing. Could it possibly occur that, in a universe such as this, an organ so perfect in all its parts could come to be possessed by man and the lower animals by any process short of design.” The human hand is sometimes adduced as another effective piece of evidence of the existence of a designing mind in the universe.

Now, man cannot possibly transcend his own experience; and all his judgments are necessarily based upon it. And it will be observed that this argument from marks of design is one purely drawn from experience. A man sees a watch made, or sees a man whose business it is to make watches; he, therefore, concludes that all watches are made. If, however, instead of being made by hand, they were fashioned by machinery, the materials only being required to be placed in a cavity of a machine, he would still know that watches were made, and that the machinery was constructed by the ingenious mind of some man. It is merely, so far, a matter of experience, and not a question of complicated structure at

all. If a man saw a wooden watch that contained no wheels, no mainspring, and that was of no practical use, he would still conclude that it was made. He would know the man who made it, or at worst know the man who knew the man who made it. On the other hand, a savage, seeing a watch for the first time, would be very unlikely to think that it had been made. Why? Because he has no experience of watchmakers. A little child, on being asked where she thought wool grew, triumphantly replied: "I know; in old men's ears." She had seen wool in her grandfather's ears, and she naturally thought that was the bed in which it grew. Such was her experience: she could not transcend it.

But, if a watch is made, the maker is not also the manufacturer of the materials out of which he manipulates it. Those are already at hand; his design, or contrivance, consists merely in skilfully arranging certain parts to produce a certain result. In this case, therefore, there is no analogy between the maker of a watch and the maker of a universe. According to all Theists, God is also the maker of the materials from which he produces so many designs. Now, while man has some experience of watchmakers, he has absolutely none of universe-makers, and therefore he cannot say that the universe was made. Besides, there is in reality no resemblance whatever between the natural processes of nature and the artistic works of man. Nobody ever saw anybody who made a tree, and there is absolutely no analogy between a manufactured article and the natural processes of nature, such as the growth of a tree from a seed, or a human being from a germ. Unless we knew the Deity and understood his capabilities, it would be merely assumption on our part to affirm that he was the maker of trees, or indeed that he was the maker of anything. We do not judge that an article has been made unless we have some experience of the manufacture of such or similar things.

The second illustration is rather an unfortunate one to

put forward as affording evidence of design in nature. Nothing is more common than to see persons or animals with defective eyesight, and any imperfection in vision resulting from an inherent quality of the organ is an evidence either of bad design or of an absence of design altogether. To allege that an imperfect organ can be the work of an all-wise and all-powerful Deity supposes that a perfect being can produce a failure. Nor could a perfect organ, designed by an Almighty God, get out of order, for it is a positive evidence of imperfect workmanship that an organ or instrument becomes impaired or rendered valueless by use. Thousands of persons born into the world are born with eyes out of which they cannot see. As Tom Hood, in one of his satirical poems, says of "Tim Turpin," who was gravel blind :

"And ne'er had seen the skies ;
For Nature, when his head was made,
Forgot to dot his eyes."

But in this case the deficiency would be chargeable against Deity ; for Nature, being neither intelligent nor good, cannot be considered as answerable for her imperfect productions. There are thousands of persons born blind, and hundreds of thousands whose sight is so defective that they keep the doctors of our Ophthalmic Hospitals in constant employment. As an optical instrument the eye is very imperfect. To enable him to see small objects, or objects at a great distance, man has to call in the aid of the optician, who can manufacture microscopes by which very minute particles of matter may be seen, or telescopes by which heavenly bodies altogether out of view to the naked eye are brought within the range of human vision. "Optically," says Professor H. D. Garrison, of America, "the eye is not perfectly planned to guard against spherical and chromatic aberrations, while in mechanical construction it is inferior to the cheapest optical instrument in the market. Astigmatism, or want of sphericity of the cornea, is present in a greater or

less degree in the case of every human eye, while the crystalline lens are not truly centred, as Helmholtz has shown, on the optical axis of the eye. The refracting media of the eye, as the aqueous humour, the crystalline lens, the vitreous humour, are not uniformly transparent, and hence rays of light during transmission undergo absorption and refraction, giving rise to various shadows, halos, and fringes, which fall upon the retina to the great impairment of vision. Even in the best of eyes there are numerous opaque granules, or floating patches, in the humours, giving rise to moving spots or spectres, so well observed, and yet so annoying, while using the microscope, especially if the field is well illuminated. Long-sightedness and short-sightedness are common difficulties, arising from want of proper relation between the refracting power of the eye and its depth, or the antero-posterior diameter. All these difficulties are practically overcome or avoided in even the cheapest photographic cameras in the market, and yet no one has ever claimed that the camera had a miraculous origin, or that the wonderful design manifest in its mechanism proves its designer to have been a God."

Every organ that man possesses is in some respect imperfect—indeed, absolute perfection is altogether inconceivable, there being degrees of perfection only, by reason of comparison with other objects. Thus, as organs, one pair of eyes may be more perfect than another, though each may be defective; and so on.

When, instead of individual objects being taken separately, we take the working of nature as a whole, we find that all animated matter is in constant warfare—the insect against the vegetable, and birds against the insects, the lower animals against birds, and man against them all. And so terrible is this struggle that, if the Design argument were really true, many of the designs are of so destructive and horrible a character as to reflect anything but credit upon the wisdom or goodness of the Deity who is the alleged

author. Thus the claws and teeth of some carnivorous animals are so arranged as to be just suited for the purpose of laying hold of and tearing the flesh of their prey. In fact, in nature the strong oppress the weak, the brutal ride rough shod over the gentle, the lion tears the peaceful deer or the inoffensive lamb ; idleness and hypocrisy revel in luxury, while modest honesty walks about in rags. And how oft indeed the earth has been deluged in blood through the wickedness of the superstitious or the caprice of the powerful. With truth crushed to earth, virtue outraged, misery and suffering perpetually abounding in the various nations of the earth, is it not folly to talk of the beautiful designs of omnipotence ?

Man, assuming in his vanity that everything was made especially for him, has arrogantly declared that everything in the universe was arranged so as to subserve to his benefit. Curé Meslier, in his " Bon Sens," relates an Eastern story, which fittingly describes this arrogance. A priest on a pilgrimage wanders through some gardens ; he is surrounded by trees, whose foliage enchants the eye, and the perfume of whose leaves is delicious. Some of the trees contain luscious fruit, of which he partakes, and, as he does so, he shouts up in his ecstasy : " Allah, Allah, how good thou art to the children of men ! Thou hast made these trees to charm our sight, and the fruit to minister to our wants ; how good thou art to the children of men ! " Proceeding on his journey, he goes through still more beautiful gardens. He hears the birds singing in the trees ; while the sun, in all his glory and refulgence, shines upon the face of the earth, and everything seems to breathe an air of joy and peace, and, in his ecstasy, the priest again exclaims : " Allah, how good thou art to the children of men ! " The sun had sunk below the horizon when the priest, still on his journey, proceeded to climb an exceedingly high mountain, on the summit of which, at nightfall, he lay himself down to rest. When in the morning he arose from his sleep he looked on the other

side of the mountain, and, lo, he saw the corpses of men who had been slain in battle strewn about the earth, and wolves devoured the carcases, and, as they did so, they seemed to exclaim, in their ecstasy : " Allah, Allah, how good thou art to the children of wolves ! Thou hast made these men fight in order that we might have the ineffable bliss of devouring their bodies ; how good thou art to the children of wolves !" And it is this arrogant feeling that the earth and the fruits thereof were made specially for him that has caused man to imagine a God designing and arranging everything with a view of making him happy and contented.

That we may understand the meaning of Natural Selection, it is well that the facts upon which the theory rests should be briefly stated. And, first, it is assumed that the proposition, that all animated matter has the power to increase beyond the means of subsistence, is one of irrefragable truth ; and that, were it not for the constant operation of checks, the number of beings that would be produced under favourable conditions would outstrip Nature's capability to provide enough food to enable all to live. It has been calculated by Linnæus that a plant which produced only two seeds annually, and whose seedlings also produced two, would, in the course of twenty years, produce no fewer than one million of plants. Nature kills off the young of animals, and destroys thousands of eggs and seeds. To every seed that comes to maturity a thousand perish ; to every animal that survives and lives a good age, hundreds die young or are destroyed at birth. And nature kills man in precisely the same way. When too many are born a famine kills thousands, and disease kills more. Among the millions of plants and animals that exist there are no two alike. Either from inherited qualities, or other similar causes, there are found to be some variations from other existing beings in every creature born into the world. However slight these variations, they constitute an advantage or a disadvantage to the individuals possessing them. These

variations take place under two well-ascertained conditions : under nature, according to geographical position and the constantly-changing conditions of life ; under domestication as the effects of habit, and in regard to plants and the lower animals, the result of artificial selection, or selection by man on account of possessing some superior qualities which were thought worthy of preservation. From the fact of there always being more beings in existence, as compared with the amount of food at their command, a struggle for existence is set up in which the "fittest," or those best adapted to their surroundings, get the advantage, while the weak, and those in other ways unfit for the uneven battle, have inevitably to succumb, the struggle being keenest among the individuals and varieties of the same species.

Now, it must not be supposed that Natural Selection is the cause of organic changes in the structure either of animals or plants ; but only that, by the means of so-called Natural Selection, the variations that occur and are beneficial to the individual are preserved. Nor must it be understood that the term Natural Selection implies that nature is conscious of selecting or choosing one being or set of beings in preference to another. It merely means that the totality of natural phenomena produces certain results, and that the term Natural Selection is the most convenient with which to describe one factor by which these results are brought about. First as to climate. Nobody will dispute the fact that the climate of various countries has undergone many changes within the past few centuries ; nor that with the change of climate the people inhabiting these parts undergo a no less distinct change. With changed conditions many beings would necessarily succumb. A severely cold climate would quickly kill off thousands of human beings before the majority had so adjusted themselves to their changed conditions as to enable them to live without extraordinary effort. Man having been diffused more widely over the face of the earth than any animal, as a consequence becomes subject

to greater variability, and, having developed to a large extent his intellectual faculties, aided by his social instinct and power of speech, was enabled to make much greater progress than any other organised being. But, taking a barbaric creature and tracing his advancement on the road to civilisation through its various stages, it will be found that it has taken place solely through the incessant action of the law of nature by which the fittest alone are enabled to survive, while the unfit are eliminated. Suppose there are a thousand persons living in a country who have been only fairly equipped for life's battle, and suppose that there should, from among them, arise a dozen or so in a slight degree an improvement upon them, the chances of life for the latter would be much greater than for the former, and they would rapidly increase in numbers; so that, in a short time, from the dozen, there would be hundreds above the common level to augment to the severity of the struggle. Among these the best—that is, those most fitted—would come to the front, and, by a constant repetition of this process, it is easy to recognise the manner in which the character of a people might be changed.

To understand aright man's progress, as compared with other beings, the importance of the advantage of his bodily struggle must not be under-estimated. Man has not always gone erect, but used his hands in locomotion and in climbing trees; and there can be no question that the first set of beings that went erect had an immense advantage over all others. Then the structure of his hands, when he had learned to walk erect, would be very advantageous in helping him to perform work for which other animals were, by their very formation, entirely unfitted to undertake. The free use of the arms and legs of man would assuredly be conducive to other modifications; and when man had learned to make articulate sounds, he could then easily out-distance all other organised beings.

All this, however, would take an immense period of time

to accomplish, and would result only from the slow and everlasting process of Natural Selection. Sexual selection, or the selection by the fittest males of the fittest females, would add considerably to the advancement of man; and under social influences even greater advantages would follow. While man would thus improve himself by contact with his fellows, he would also improve many of the lower animals by domesticating them, and many plants by artificially selecting and preserving those that best suited his tastes or possessed some real utility. How, it will be asked, does this evidence of the gradual development of man effect the argument drawn from design? In this way. Take the eye. The Darwinian hypothesis pre-supposes a time when what is now called an eye was a most imperfect organ in all animals; that only those animals that used these organs developed them to any extraordinary extent; and that to-day the eye in man seems to have reached its highest point of development, and refuses to do all the work which the brain requires it to perform. It may safely be affirmed that, in regard to organised beings, functions precede organs, for it has been discovered that there are some animals in existence that have no organ of vision, and yet, in a sense, it may be said that they perceive, though indistinctly, objects about them. For example, the jelly fish sees, though it has no eyes. Other animals—such, for instance, as the mole, and some species of rat—have eyes, but, passing their lives entirely in subterranean passages, have lost the power of vision.

Now, if the best eyes are only the result of development, how can it be said that eyes were originally designed by an omnipotent, all-wise, and all-good Deity? On the other hand, if it be said that God designed the world and man, and let Nature do the rest, it is only saying, in other words, that Deity, in his infinite wisdom, designed imperfect eyes and allowed them to become more perfect by a slow and painful process—that is, that God is good, but not all-good;

that he is wise, but not all-wise ; and that, being all-powerful, he did not exert either his wisdom or goodness in the creation of the universe. Rudimentary organs would be extremely difficult to understand on the principle of design. In the human ear there are several muscles in a rudimentary condition which are absolutely useless. For what purpose was the *mammæ* of all male quadrupeds designed ? It is in a rudimentary condition, and serves no useful purpose. Or of what use are the incisor teeth of ruminants, that never cut through the gums ? There are in man, also, various muscles which are of no utility to him, but which are highly developed in some of the lower animals. A horse or cow, for instance, twitch their skin when annoyed by flies ; and, though man possesses remnants of the muscle by which this movement is effected (the *panniculus carnosus*), it is, for the most part, useless to him. Some men, it is true, can contract the muscles of their scalps, move their ears, or perform other extraordinary movements ; but, in the large majority of human beings, these muscles are in an altogether rudimentary condition.

The Design argument, therefore, is an ingenious attempt to make use of certain facts of nature—such as the adaptation of certain organs to perform certain functions—with a view of proving that they were designed for such a purpose ; while the whole of human experience goes to show that only those whose organs were so adapted could possibly have survived, and that those whose organs were ill adapted for the purposes of life's struggle were pressed out in the general scramble for existence. To reason accurately, the theologian should begin at the other end. He should take man in his primitive condition, and try and demonstrate admirable design in a god-man savage ! Or, tracing the horse back to the bear, as Professor Huxley has done, he should endeavour to show the infinite wisdom of the arrangement by which a wild beast was transformed, by a slow and painful though a purely natural process, into a

tame, handsome, and useful animal. No; in the face of the facts of evolution the Design argument is no longer tenable. It has been slain alike by science and common sense, and in a few years will be consigned to that oblivion in which older and more pernicious errors have found a well-deserved and final resting-place.



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BIBLE HORRORS;

OR, TRUE BLASPHEMY.

BY ARTHUR B. MOSS.

BLASPHEMY is a peculiar offence: only a believer the being whose reputation is attacked can commit it, and even then time and circumstance have to be taken into account. The Jew cannot blaspheme the Christian God, because he does not believe in him; the Christian may say what he likes against the gods of the Brahmin and Buddhist; and the Mohammedan may speak disrespectfully of all the gods of the nations of the earth save his own. All, however, must be careful that they give utterance to their blasphemous expressions at the proper time and place. The Jew must not attack the Christian Deity in an English church, nor the Christian sneer at Jehovah in a Jewish synagogue, nor either of them ridicule the Mohammedan Deity in a mosque in Turkey; but in their own city, and at the proper season, each may blacken the deity of the other.

Ridicule has always been considered a powerful weapon in eradicating false impressions from the human mind, though some pious persons now declare it to be a crime when it is used to show the fallacy of their own belief. Do not the religious ridicule the opinions and cherished beliefs of Freethinkers? Did they not laugh immoderately at what seemed to them the monstrously absurd notion of the late Charles Darwin, that man had evolved from a lower form of being? Did they not ridicule the Materialist when he declared that he believed that the laws of nature were sufficient to account for "all phenomena without the meddling of the gods"? Then why should Freethinkers abstain from using a weapon which has proved effectual in many a controversial encounter? The statesman uses it,

the historian wields it, the social reformer does not disdain to employ it, and the popular orator knows its wonderful power in exploding false notions.

But real blasphemy is an attack by a believer upon the reputation of his deity. It matters not that he does it to flatter the power or vanity or the capriciousness of his god : the blasphemy is none the less real. Did it never occur to the Christian that his Bible teems with such blasphemy—indeed, is as filled with it as some of the numbers of a blasphemous publication (in the eyes of Freethinkers) called the *War Cry*. The cry of the Christians was always a cry for blood : their appetite for it is much stronger than that of the general occupants of the gallery at third rate theatres during the representation of a drama in which several murders occur in each act and a frightful slaughter at the end of the play. Look into the Bible, my readers, for the record of human bloodshed. In early times the earth was a slaughter-house and Jehovah a mighty butcher. Take the merciless slaughter of the Egyptians, and see if it finds its parallel in profane history. Not content with depriving the Egyptians of water by causing Moses to turn it into blood ; not satisfied with afflicting an unoffending people with plagues of frogs, lice, and flies ; not satisfied with destroying harmless cattle with a grievous murrain ; not content with supplementing these with frightful plagues of hail, locusts, darkness, and the slaughter of the first-born, this Bible God allowed the Israelites to utterly “spoil the Egyptians,” robbing them of jewels and other valuable property, and ultimately bringing them to the Red Sea to perish in the waves, that the Israelites might exult over their death. And what was the cause of all this ? What had the Egyptians done ? That God had hardened “Pharaoh’s heart” is the only explanation vouchsafed to us respecting this Bible horror. And so the poor Egyptians had to suffer, not through any fault of theirs or of Pharaoh’s, but through a fault attributable to God alone.

Barbarous deeds recorded in the Bible are of two kinds—those perpetrated by the bloody hand of Deity himself and those to which he gave explicit sanction. The slaughter of the Amalekites by Joshua had the approval of the Deity ; the uplifted hand of Moses, tightly clutching the “rod of the Lord,” was enough to win the support of Jehovah, who was always on the side of injustice and tyranny. This, in

all conscience, was frightful enough. But mark what soon follows. Moses, Aaron, and seventy elders have had an interview with the Lord. From the summit of an exceedingly high mountain they are witnesses of his great glory. They behold the feet of the Infinite God! Moses even receives the commandments, written by the finger of God upon great tablets of stone. While Moses is thus "interviewing" the great God of the Jews, Aaron is among the people seeking to satisfy their craving for a real god—one they could see and handle, and who could assist them in time of trouble; for their minds were sorely disturbed by great doubts and misgivings concerning the God whom Moses had spoken of so often, but who appeared to be so far above the clouds that nobody could get at him. Aaron, with Jewish simplicity, thought that a golden god was the most appropriate for the children of Israel; he, therefore, beset himself the task of making a golden calf. Retribution came quickly; but, as is usual in Biblical matters, it fell on the wrong shoulders. No sooner did Moses discover that the "God in the skies" was doubted than he took a most effective way of removing all scepticism—a method which has often been imitated since his day. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: 'Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men' (Exodus xxxii. 26—28). Well might Jehovah, in his Commandments, say: "I am a jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children." And might he not have added, "The sins of the priests upon the people"?

But this is not all—

"On horror's head horrors accumulate."

Turn over the leaves of your Bible, and read how God commanded Moses to war against the Midianites, slaying them without mercy, and preserving only the maidens, that they might satisfy the lustful craving of a brutal horde of soldiers (Numbers xxxi. 7—18). Read this for yourselves; con-

template these wicked horrors, and say if it is not a libel upon a wise and good God to allege that he ever commanded such wanton barbarity ! And let me abjure you not to pollute your lips with Bible obscenities ; do not allow your children to read them either at home or at school. They were written in a barbarous age by an ignorant people, and they are fit only for brutal barbarians grovelling in a very atmosphere of licentiousness.

The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are filled with stories of murders and aggressive wars, to which Jehovah always gave his approving smile. Percy Bysshe Shelley was an Atheist : Atheists are all supposed to be wicked, heartless men ; yet Shelley, in his " Declaration of Rights," says : " Man has no right to kill his brother. It is no excuse that he does so in uniform—he only adds the infamy of servitude to the crime of murder." Was Shelley a greater lover of humanity than the God who is alleged to have made us all ? Is the Atheist more deeply touched by human sorrow and pain than the Christian God ? Or are these records of bloodshed and crime, said to have been committed at the express will of the " Heavenly Father," but a long tissue of falsehoods, written in the dark nights of ignorance and superstition ?

Among Bible horrors the second class of crime is to give sanction to the perpetration of barbarous deeds. This the Christian God has frequently done, so that in all ages the Bible has served as a text-book to which the believer could refer to find justification for the committal of all sorts of horrible crimes. In Leviticus xxiv. 16 we find these words : " And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord he shall surely be put to death ; and all the congregation shall certainly stone him, as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be put to death." This passage has incited fathers to destroy their own children ; it has induced men to break their fellow creatures upon the rack—to stone, to imprison, to crucify, or consume them at the stake. No suffering has been too intense for the blasphemer. And yet blasphemy is a priest-invented crime, which no unbeliever ever has committed, or ever can commit.

Again, in Deuteronomy xiii. 6—10 we read : " If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine

own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers—namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth—thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him. Thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die." Could wickedness go farther? Under this injunction the bravest thinkers, the most heroic men that have adorned the world, have suffered inexpressible torture. Socrates despised the gods of his time. That noble philosopher suffered death like a hero and martyr rather than be false to conviction. Even though he was broken with age, he had courage enough to bear without a murmur all the tortures to which his enemies subjected him. Bruno, Vanini, and a multitude of men and women less known to fame, have perished under this wicked command. No wonder that human progress was slow while a passage like this could be effectively appealed to; no wonder that while religion was strong science was weak. As long as the Church had power the people were steeped in ignorance. Every martyr and every hero have made the path smoother for subsequent pioneers of progress. Let us remember this, and let the heroism of our tortured and persecuted ancestors give inspiration to our every thought and deed to-day.

Probably the two passages which have wrought the most evil in the world are these: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxi. 18); "Both thy bondmen and bondwomen which thou hast with thee shalt be of the heathen round about you, and they shalt serve thee for ever" (Leviticus xxv. 44, 45, 46). The first passage was the court of appeal in all cases of alleged witchcraft. Learned judges, whose common sense in most matters was keen enough, were, nevertheless, led to believe—upon no other authority than this infamous passage from the alleged inspired word of God—that witches had a real existence, and entered into the bodies of men for evil purposes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more than a hundred thousand persons were put to death in Germany alone as witches. In the first year of the reign of James I. in England an Act was

passed defining the crime of witchcraft with wonderful minuteness. It says : "Any one that shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation of any evil or wicked spirit, or consult or covenant with, entertain or employ, feed or reward, any evil or wicked spirit to or for any purpose, or take up any dead man, etc., etc., such offenders, duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer death." Soon after the passing of this Act the popular delusion spread like an epidemic, devastating many parts of England ; and under this statute hundreds of men, women, and children were mercilessly murdered with the full sanction of the people, who were completely saturated with superstition. But if the people were ignorant, if the judges' minds were warped by theological prejudice, can it be said that the Infinite Ruler of the Universe was no better able to discriminate between prevailing delusions and eternal truth ? Is the wisdom of God the same as the ignorance of man ? Did a "God of love" look down upon this earth, and complacently watch the transactions of Matthew Hopkins, the "witchfinder," and his cowardly set of colleagues ? Did "our Father who art in heaven" give these deeds of blood his warm approval, as though he had heartily declared "my expressed will is being done" ? If he did not sanction these atrocious crimes, done in his name for his glorification, why did he not stretch forth his almighty arm, and thwart the wickedness of his followers ?

What shall we say of *slavery* ? What of a God who describes one class of men as the "money" of another (Exodus xxi. 21) ? There are no words in the English language strong enough with which to characterise him if it were true ; but it is not true—it is all a libel : it is the believer's blasphemy of a God he pretends to worship. The Christian has yet to learn that his highest conception of Deity is but a reflection of himself ; that no God has ever possessed loftier sentiments or grander characteristics than the people out of whose fertile imagination he grew. Indeed, men have in all ages been god-makers, giving to "airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

The New Testament is not exempt from the charge that is here made against the other fragmentary essays which go to make up what in this country is called the "Holy Bible." Jesus, who is elevated by the priests to the position of an Infinite Deity, is recorded to have said : "If any man come

unto me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters—yea, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke xiv. 26). Can it be true that a God of wisdom and goodness would have us hate those who are near and dear to us, and sever ourselves for ever from them, in order that we might render service or pay homage to one of whom no man has the smallest knowledge? Is it not blasphemy to suppose that a loving God would say to his children: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt. x. 24)? The mission of a Devil could not be more evil in intention. It must never be forgotten that it is in the New Testament where the appalling doctrine of everlasting burning in hell for unbelievers is first announced as the distinct teaching of Jesus. Vindictive women, stirred by the irresistible passion of jealousy, have conceived the wicked idea of torturing and disfiguring their enemies or rivals by throwing over them a quantity of sulphuric acid: fiendish men have, in a moment of madness, pushed a fellow-creature into a vat of boiling oil; and a drunken parent has been known to hold his child’s hand in a fire for some moments. These fearful agonies have been endured long enough in all conscience, though only for a few brief hours; yet the New Testament tells us that there is a loving father in heaven who will suffer some of his children to pass an eternity in hell, ceaselessly tormented by the flames, but never consumed. I will not, I cannot, believe it; and, though my countrymen may punish me for my unbelief, though they may fine and imprison me, I shall still maintain that a God of goodness could never be guilty of such infinite wickedness. To say that God will punish men endlessly in hell has always been considered man’s feeble way of expressing his admiration of God’s justice; to deny that he would perpetrate such a gigantic and unpardonable crime has ever been considered the greatest blasphemy. Number me with blasphemers, from Socrates downwards: it is an honour to be in such company; and with them I am prepared to stand or fall.

That the Bible teems with records of immorality and obscenity, which it is a criminal offence to print in all their naked ugliness, everybody knows full well; and yet this book is read in our national schools, and there are good men and women who declare that they would sooner

have their children remain in the direst ignorance than have them brought up without a full knowledge of the contents of the Bible. Let us charitably suppose that they speak in ignorance—that they really have not diligently perused the Bible themselves. It is readily acknowledged that the Bible is not an altogether bad book, that it contains passages of rare beauty, of lofty sentiment, and profound wisdom; but it can never be taken as a text-book, because it abounds in contradictions and absurdities; and it were far better that man should thrust it aside for ever than that he should accept it as containing “the beginning and end of all wisdom”—as a book written at the special command of a wise and good God. Let the Christians improve their Bible; let them eliminate these barbarous things from its pages; let them proclaim their belief in a nobler God and a loftier creed. The pure, the good, the just, and the beautiful the Freethinker will never attack; but all that is cruel, wicked, impure, and unjust he will always condemn, whether it be said to come from God or from man.

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HEALTH, WEALTH, & HAPPINESS.

BY ARTHUR B. MOSS.

SCIENCE, at the present time, is merely in its infancy. Much as some persons imagine they know, the wise are ever ready to admit that the accumulated knowledge of to-day is but a speck compared with the infinite mass of knowledge that yet remains to be acquired, and that future study and labour will yield to man. Fifty years ago very little was known by the people of this country of sanitary science; the masses lived in total ignorance of the true cause of the undue amount of disease and death among the poor; and it was not till the year 1840, when a Parliamentary Committee of inquiry into the health of towns was appointed, that it was discovered to what a large extent bad ventilation, bad drainage, and impure air were the causes of sickness, disease, and premature death. If we go back some centuries, we shall find that our ancestors were, on the whole, a healthy and hardy people. This may fairly be explained by the fact that they lived a more simple and a more natural life than it is possible for us to do in these days of large towns, small houses, immense populations, excessive competition, railways, tramways, telegraph, and electricity, and when, indeed, it needs hard fighting to obtain the bare means of subsistence. To have muscular force, and the skill to use it, meant that you were well equipped for life's battle; and in the great struggle for existence the elimination of the unfit, which was continuously going on, left the robust and hardy warriors in full possession of the field. In civilised times, however, we have to look at man existing in the cities, towns, and villages, and to ask how it is that he is so often smitten down with diseases the cause of which he is too often entirely ignorant of.

Now, there are few, I presume, who will doubt the fact that many of the employments in which a considerable number of the citizens of this country are daily engaged

are of a very unhealthy character, and that very slight precautions, if any, are taken by employers against the possibility of disease arising through the warehouses, factories, or shops, in which a number of hands are employed, not being properly ventilated. It may be safely said that the lives of thousands are annually sacrificed through this means. And how is this? Is it because employers are utterly reckless concerning the health of those they employ? Is it that masters deliberately seek to ruin the constitution of their servants and to wreck the prospects of thousands of families? Or is it that employers and employés are alike ignorant of the rudiments of sanitary science, and from lack of knowledge allow this frightful evil to continue? The latter, it seems to me, is the most reasonable conclusion to which we can come on this point, for to accept any other explanation would be to tacitly imply that many employers of labour were reckless and inhuman monsters, altogether unfit to live. Let the truth be spoken. We have all of us grown up without a knowledge of the laws of health; and past Governments and individual efforts combined have done very little towards showing the means by which we may avoid disease and become healthy, active citizens. Sanitary science should be taught in our schools, to girls as well as boys; for we should never forget that our daughters become the mothers of subsequent generations, and that upon them devolves the duty of bringing up children so that they may become healthy and intelligent men and women. At present more lectures, similar to those delivered under the auspices of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Society, are required in every town in England; lectures by ladies specially suited to the requirements of women; and health lectures dealing with the physiological aspect of the subject, as well as others, to men, by gentlemen qualified to speak with authority upon such matters.

Eminent scientists have declared that without a healthy body it is almost impossible to have a healthy mind; the one is dependent upon the other. Healthy bodies are the only trustworthy organs for healthy minds. To repair the waste that is continually taking place in our bodies—to replace the brain waste that occurs from intellectual activity, it is necessary that each individual should have proper food, and sufficient exercise to cause the food to have the most useful effect in our bodies. But it is quite possible to

develop, in almost equal proportions, the mind and the body : allow each faculty to be usefully employed ; enlarge the mind by vigorous thinking ; strengthen the memory by systematic study ; increase the perceptive ability ; develop the muscles by physical effort, by hard labour, or healthful sports ; and so become, as near as possible, physical and mental giants.

One of the chief reasons why so many of our countrymen neglect their health, and fail to cultivate their strength, is because they imagine that a thick, hard hand—a strong, well-developed frame, looks vulgar ; they will not engage in employments in which they are compelled to use physical force : these they consider below their dignity ; and the present constitution of society lends countenance to this mischievous fallacy. As a rule, men and women who employ their strength in daily labour are rendered thereby healthier and stronger individuals, while those who are engaged in merely sedentary occupations decrease in vigour and vital force. Everybody, no matter what his or her employment may be, should apportion a certain time of each day for physical exercise. Men and women alike should practise swimming and rowing, and any other healthful exercises to which their tastes may incline them.

Leaving the large question of healthy or unhealthy employments, the next step is to glance at our habitations, and see whether our surroundings are conducive or not to the happiness of the masses. Four things are imperatively necessary in every home—personal cleanliness, pure air, pure water, and unadulterated food.

Personal Cleanliness.—Cleanliness of the body is one of the surest preventives of disease ; dirt is often the mask behind which disease hides itself when assailing human beings. Against personal cleanliness disease hurls its deadly weapons in vain ; and with a clean home and a clean person one is ensured, to a certain extent, against some of the most insidious foes of human flesh and blood.

Pure Air.—Nothing is more important to man than to see that wherever he goes he breathes pure air—whether at home, or at his club, or travelling in train, bus, or tram. And what is pure air ? Most intelligent people know now that man breathes “two breaths.” The air he gives out and the air he takes in are different ; and they each have a

different effect. Pure air is generally admitted to be composed of four leading constituents—namely, a mixture of three gases (oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid), and of the vapour of water. Air once breathed should not be breathed over again, for the air you give out contains a large proportion of carbonic acid gas, which is the same deadly vapour that is given off after charcoal has been consumed in a room, where all the cracks and crevices have been stopped up to prevent any of the fumes escaping. No person should breathe air heavily charged with carbonic acid gas, else he may expect that his health will seriously suffer. Most probably he will grow up a weak, nervous, pale-faced creature, unfit for the great struggle of life, his depressed condition leading him to resort to drink, in order to give him an artificial vitality, which Nature herself sternly refuses to supply. Many of the poor cause their children to breathe foul air, keeping them all closely huddled together in one small room, where disease is often generated, and where young children are permitted gradually to pine away, without one word of protest from the British public, and with absolute silence from sanitary inspectors. Oxygen and nitrogen give life and health to the human body; they feed the fire of life, which carbonic-acid gas of itself would extinguish. What is wanted, then, is plenty of ventilation in houses, to let in the pure air and let out the foul. The air we breathe, being warm, rises; the cold air descends. Thus, while we breathe out the carbonic acid it ascends towards the ceiling, while the oxygen and nitrogen descend into our mouths.

It is very unhealthy to sleep upon the floor of a room that has been made at all warm during the day, because at night the carbonic-acid gas, which has risen to the ceiling on account of its warmth, has time to cool; it then descends to the ground; and so those who sleep upon the floor absorb into their system this foul air, which has a most baneful effect upon the health.

Considering the large number of deaths annually caused among the poor through neglect and carelessness in regard to proper ventilation, it is well that something should be done to acquaint the working classes in every town in England how much this excessive mortality is due to their own ignorance and folly. Dr. Lyon Playfair once observed that a great part of sanitary science can be comprised in

one word—Cleanliness. If everybody would exercise care in seeing that everything in the home was kept perfectly clean, and that they themselves were cleanly in their habits, the world would be much freer from disease than it is, the atmosphere would be healthier, and zymotic diseases of every kind would certainly decrease.

Pure Water.—This is another essential to good health. In many provincial towns the water supply is in the hands of the Municipal body, and the people can depend upon having a constant supply of pure water; in London, however, the case is different. There the inhabitants have to put up with a very impure article, teeming with sewage matter and animalculæ, which is supplied by water companies at an excessive price.

Unadulterated Food.—Doubtless the Adulteration of Foods Act has done a good deal towards preventing the wholesale consumption of bad food; nevertheless, still more requires to be done, for, as our sanitary inspectors do not prove themselves to be ubiquitous, poor persons are sometimes duped into purchasing diseased for wholesome meat, butterine for butter, and sausages composed of minute morsels of fat, well mixed with numerous particles of mouldy bread, instead of the genuine article. Better far to have a little good meat, even if you have to pay dearly for it, than a large quantity of indifferent stuff. Some eminent men just now are persuading the people to become vegetarians, urging them to live solely on a vegetarian diet. For my part, I hope that the people will hesitate a long while before they adopt the advice of these eminent ones. Looking at the internal physiological structure of man, some have contended that he is more a herbivorous or a frugiferous than a carnivorous animal. Perhaps this is so. Experience, however, is worth a great deal more than theory. Recent chemical science has made clear the fact that more albuminous matter is digestible in animal than in vegetable food; and, generally speaking, vegetarianism does not prosper in cold climates, or in climates of a very variable character. Moreover, if vegetarianism were to become general, it would have the effect of increasing the price of vegetables, and of lowering the standard of the diet of the people of this country. This cannot surely be a desirable result to achieve. Upon the authority of Dr. Charles Drysdale, whom I know from personal experience

to have given the subject deep study for many years, I allege that a mixed diet is preferable for man. The learned Doctor says: "Hofmann found that, on feeding men with potatoes, lentils, and bread, only 38.7 of the nitrogenous matter has been digested; 44.4 escaped from the body undigested. Meineret, again, found that the whole of the nitrogen in meat was digested with the exception of 2.6 per cent.; that the same occurred with milk, eggs, and cheese." Vegetarianism pure and simple is impracticable; most so-called vegetarians eat eggs and milk, neither of which can be rightly described as vegetables.

Having done all that is possible to acquire good health, it becomes necessary for every adult person to make an effort towards securing additional wealth, and to increase the prosperity of the country in which he lives. "Money is the root of all evil," some insane moralist has declared; there are a good many, however, who would be the better if they could get a firm clutch at this root. A man may cut his throat with a razor: is the razor or the man to blame? It is the wrong use of money that is an evil. Many persons still suppose that wealth consists in the possession of so much hard cash, notwithstanding the frequency with which Political Economists have exposed the fallacy of this idea. Money is not wealth; it is merely a means of exchange; it is the medium by which one article is bartered for another. And it should be understood that it is quite possible for a nation to be at the height of its prosperity with the majority of the workers in the country on the verge of starvation. The rich may possess all the real wealth. They may have in their hands the land, which should be in all countries a great source of wealth; they may have trade, and, while reaping rich harvests for themselves, may grind down those who assist them to amass fortunes; and they may add to this the advantage which uniform and combined power gives in the Legislative Chamber. But, for a nation to be truly great, each individual should at least have the chance of acquiring the means of subsistence. In many old countries at the present time this is not the case. So many people are born that many of them perish for the want of the mere necessities of life.

Now, the only source of wealth accruing to the working classes is the surplus from wages after all necessary expenses

in support of the family and home are made. At the present rate of wages very little can be put by each week by the poor to be used at times of emergency. The demand for labour is not large ; the supply is enormous ; and the law of supply and demand, and the consequent increase or decrease of price, applies just as much to human labour as to any commodity brought into the market. Let working men remember this ; let them remember that it is no use grumbling, and forming Unions to protect themselves against employers, when their wages go down ; they have only one remedy, and that is the limitation of their offspring, by wise prudence preventing the labour market from being overstocked. Wages are low in England because there are too many labourers in the field, and in the struggle for existence the very poor are compelled to accept the lowest possible wage. In New Zealand labour is well paid because there are fewer labourers, and these, therefore, command their own price. Among many erroneous statements, Canon Kingsley said that science disproved that population has a tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence. Saying this does not prove it. If science disproves the truth of the rather unpleasant discovery of the Rev. Mr. Malthus, it is somewhat singular that scientific men appear to be totally ignorant of it. Dr. Darwin bases the whole of his inferences in "The Origin of Species" on what the late Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn declared was an "irrefragable truth"—viz., "that all animated matter has the tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence." From ignorance in respect to this law, the poor get poorer and poorer, until many of them have to seek refuge in our workhouses, to be kept at the expense of the ratepayers. Is not this a great iniquity ? Are the thoughtful and frugal ever to be pulled down by the thoughtless and the dissolute ? Poverty and crime are twin brothers ; throughout life they are invariably associated. Civilisation means increased comfort, additional knowledge, and more leisure for the masses ; poverty, being opposed to these, is in reality opposed to higher civilisation.

Whether drunkenness is increasing or diminishing is a question that cannot be decisively answered. We all know, however, that the drinking customs of society still entail an enormous amount of misery among all classes, and that poverty is augmented by this means. Drunkenness, indeed,

is a great cause of poverty ; but it is not the chief cause. Poverty may also be truly said to be a great cause of drunkenness, or, if it is not a cause, it is certainly an aggravation of the offence. Surrounded by evil influences and a dirty home, and without the means of getting sufficient food to sustain life, persons stupidly fly to drink : the artificial excitement caused by the alcoholic liquors soon dies away, and the drunkard is left to sorrow and despair.

Men want wealth : how are they to get it ? By an assiduous devotion to their daily work ; by enterprise ; by thrifty and temperate habits ; and by a wise limitation of their offspring. It is possible for all persons to live in comfort and happiness ; but, then, they must look upon poverty, not as a blessing, but as a positive evil. Remove the chief cause of poverty—a redundant population—educate the masses, and with increased knowledge the way will soon be found by which the other evils may be removed. Health first, then comfort, arising from a possession of a sufficiency of the good things of this life ; and as pain is obliterated, and pleasure takes its place, the increased happiness of the masses is ensured. What is happiness ? says one. Does it not differ in each individual ? Does not one seem happy at results which give others pain ? To each of these questions a reply must be given in the affirmative. But we aim at the highest happiness for all, and this can only be achieved by removing all obstacles like poverty and misery to the progress of the people.

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FICTITIOUS GODS.

BY ARTHUR B. MOSS.

IN all countries belief in gods has arisen from the ignorance and impatience of man. The complex phenomena of the universe he could not explain; everything appeared to him to be shrouded in mystery; his whole nature was weighed down by fear; and, instead of patiently studying nature, he set himself the task of manufacturing gods and devils, to whom he referred as the source of all events in the universe. His first objects of worship were fetiches—gods of wood, stone, trees, fire, water. In course of time, however, he began to worship living beings, whom he considered to have powers and qualities infinitely transcending his own. With the development of the human mind came a change of belief respecting the gods; and with the decay of fetichism grew up a belief in Polytheism—that is, a belief in a number of gods and goddesses ruling over and superintending various departments of nature. This belief is far more natural to the human mind than the modern idea of one ruling and controlling power in the universe. "Though," says John Stuart Mill, "I have defined the problem of natural theology to be that of the existence of God, or of a God, rather than of gods, there is the amplest historical evidence that the belief in gods is immeasurably more natural to the human mind than the belief in one author and ruler of nature, and that this more elevated belief is, compared with the former, an artificial product, requiring (except when impressed by early education) a considerable amount of intellectual culture before it could be reached." And so men worshipped numberless gods and goddesses, and each had control over certain departments in nature. One was master of the wind and the storm; another made the sun to shine, the trees to grow, and the heavenly bodies to move in perfect order; another was the god of war; another the perpetual president

of the Celestial Peace Society. Some of these gods had innumerable heads ; some had only one eye or one arm ; others had wings ; others, like serpents, dragged their weary lengths upon the earth ; some appeared like giants, and hurled thunderbolts at the heads of offending peoples ; some were invisible spirits, and others were visible in the form of man.

The progress of human knowledge has shattered into fragments belief in such gods or goddesses as Jupiter, Jove, Apollo, Venus, etc. ; and this has given place to belief in one God, called in different countries by the names of Brahma, Buddha, Allah, Jehovah, or Jesus. But if the old gods were merely chimeras, resulting from the desire of man to explain the cause of all things "in heaven above or earth beneath," without understanding them, are we quite sure that this one remaining God is any more a reality than the sham gods of the past ? Are we sure that the phenomena of the universe cannot be explained without reference to God ? We are told now that there exists but one God, and that, though he is called by a variety of names, he is, in reality, but one and the same being. When asked what are the distinguishing characteristics of this God, theologians tell us that he is an infinite spirit, that he has existed from all eternity, that he is all-powerful and all-wise, and that he is infinite in goodness and mercy.

Though there are millions who believe in the existence of Brahma, Buddha, and Allah, a careful study of the religions of India and Turkey will satisfy us that each of these gods is destitute of many of the qualities that are ascribed to the Author and Governor of the Universe. Neither of them is all-mighty, or all-wise, or all-good. Each of them has many qualities which belong only to man. They hate and love alternately, and are pleased with the sacrifice of innocent blood. They are jealous, and abhor none so much as those who despise them. But in England we are told that Jehovah is the only true God, and that Jesus is his son. We are informed that the Bible contains a true description of Deity, and that the part of it called the New Testament records the life and teachings of Jesus, who was God and the Son of God at the same time, and belief or disbelief in whom will determine our everlasting destiny in another world.

We turn to the Bible to study the character and doings

of Jehovah, who sometimes was known by the name of Elohim, the great "I Am." To our astonishment and disgust, we find that, instead of the Jewish Deity being an "infinite spirit," he is represented as a petty tribal God, possessing all the worst characteristics of the people out of whose imagination he grew. He is a visible God, who sometimes walks in a garden at the "cool of day," or hides himself behind a burning bush, or has an occasional interview with one of his chief priests on the summit of a mountain, or a quiet meal with another at an obscure inn. He is a jealous, vacillating, vindictive being, who does many barbarous things to gratify his own personal vanity. He is neither wise nor just, and is utterly powerless against nations with "chariots of iron." Such a God, then, cannot be the one whom men allege they worship as the author of the universe. Must we turn, then, to Jesus as God? He was no God; he was a man, and nothing more. Though he is alleged to have been brought miraculously into the world, and taken out of it in an equally mysterious way, he did nothing to lead the people who knew him to suppose that he was a God. On the contrary, the Jews thought him a blaspheming impostor, who deserved to die an ignominious death. It took some time for the idea of the divinity of Jesus to grow in the minds of men. In his "Philosophical Dictionary" (page 405) Voltaire says: "The Socinians, who are regarded as blasphemers, do not recognise the divinity of Jesus Christ. They dare to pretend—with the philosophers of antiquity, with the Jews, the Mohammedans, and most other nations—that the idea of a God-man is monstrous; that the distance from God to man is infinite; and that it is impossible for a perishable body to be infinite, immense, or eternal. They have the confidence to quote Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, in their favour, who, in his 'Ecclesiastical History,' book i., chapter 9, declares that it is absurd to imagine the uncreated and unchangeable nature of Almighty God taking the form of man. They cite the fathers of the Church, Justin and Tertullian, who have said the same thing—Justin in his Dialogue with Triphonus, and Tertullian in his Discourse against Praxeas. They quote from St. Paul, who never calls Jesus Christ God, and who calls him man very often. They carry their audacity so far as to affirm that the Christians passed three entire ages in forming by degrees the apotheosis of Jesus,

and that they only raised this astonishing edifice by the example of Pagans, who had deified mortals. At first, according to them, Jesus was only regarded as a man inspired by God, and then as a creature more perfect than others. They gave him, some time after, a place above the angels, as St. Paul tells us. Every day added to his greatness. He in time became an emanation proceeding from God. This was not enough : he was born before time. At last he was made God substantial with God. Crellius, Volquelsius, Natalis, Alexander, and Hornbeck have supported all these blasphemies by arguments which astonish the wise and mislead the weak. Above all, Faustus Socinus spread the seeds of this doctrine in Europe, and at the end of the sixteenth century a new species of Christianity was established."

Some of the utterances of Jesus would lead us to suppose that he made pretensions to being God, such as "I and my Father are one," "Before Abraham was I am ;" and, when tempted by the Devil, he said : "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." But other declarations which he made go to show that at times, at least, he was more rational, and professed only to be a man. But, if Christians say that Jesus was "the very God of very God," it is sufficient to answer that he possessed none of the attributes which are said to belong to Deity, for no amount of argument could induce a rational being to believe that a finite man could be either omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. How can it be said either that Jesus was born, or that he died, if he were God? Can an eternal being either begin or cease to be? And when Jesus was on earth, roaming about hither and thither, and preaching and performing the wonders that are related of him, was he also at the same time filling every particle of space in the universe, ruling and governing the mighty forces of nature, taking cognisance of every crime that was perpetrated, hearing and answering the prayers of the righteous, and meting out deserved punishment to the wicked? After he was crucified was the universe without a ruler and governor for two days, while the God Jesus lay dead in the silent tomb? The truth is, all the talk of the clergy in support of the Divinity of Jesus is but a farrago of nonsense ; we are forced, therefore, to conclude that Jesus, in common with the others named above, is a fictitious God.

There yet remains another conception of Deity which it is necessary for us to consider. After all the erroneous conceptions with which we have just dealt have been swept clean out of the human mind, many persons still cling to the belief that there must exist in the infinite expanse a Supreme Being, who superintends the working of nature, and in whose mighty power are the destinies of all men. This belief is supported by four general arguments:—

1. That there is a general consent among mankind that such a Being exists.
2. That there must have been a "first cause to nature," and that God is the "first cause."
3. That the universe shows marks of design, that design implies a designer, and that God is the designer of the universe.
4. That man is conscious of the existence of God.

1. The mere fact that there now exist thousands of Atheists is overwhelming proof that the supposition that mankind generally consents to the existence of God is erroneous. Moreover, if there were a universal belief in the existence of God, there is abundance of proof that this belief is not in the God whom pure Theists profess to worship, but in a being of varying attributes, according to the climatic conditions, food, and education of the individuals who manifest belief.

2. "First cause," as applied to nature as a whole, is absurd. So far as man can ascertain, nature is infinite; and in an infinite regression there can be no first cause. Cause and effect are terms which apply only to phenomena, to the changeable element in nature. Man knows nothing of cause and effect, except in relation to other causes and effects which have preceded them, and without which they could not have happened. But in what sense can God be called "first cause"? To know whether he is "first," we must carry the inquiry further back, as the child frequently does, and ask, "What caused God?" and, if the theologian says that God is without cause, we at once ask whether it is not far more reasonable to suppose that nature—which appears to be infinite, and which it is impossible to conceive either as beginning or ceasing to be—is without cause—that is, infinite and eternal—than to say that God is the

uncaused causer of nature, without defining what is meant by God? In truth, man can have no idea of God, if by God is meant an infinite being. What is an idea? It is an image on the mind. The human mind is, as it were, a mirror upon which nothing is reflected but the external object of nature. Man has never had any ideas but those which result from the study and observation of nature. If we say to a man, "Think of a horse, or an elephant, or a man," he at once pictures these beings, which he has seen on his mind; but, if he were asked to picture some being that he had not seen or heard described, or seen a representation of, he could not do it. In like manner, man can never give an intelligible idea of God, because, in point of truth, he has no idea of God. His highest conception is of a great man; consequently, God has always been fashioned after his maker, man.

3. It has often seemed strange to me that a philosopher like John Stuart Mill should have considered the "Design Argument" as having great force. To me the argument appears to be exceedingly weak. First, it is alleged that things wrought by human ingenuity show marks of design; but they only manifest these marks to persons who know something of human workmanship. An intelligent man can see that a watch has been designed: he judges that its mechanism is arranged by an intelligent being to effect a certain definite purpose; but, then, he invariably concludes thus because he knows something of the designers of watches. A savage would not conclude that a watch was designed by an intelligent being; he would be more likely to think it was alive. But what analogy is there between something made out of materials by man and a product of nature? Who would ever conclude that a blade of grass had been designed, or a tree, or a mountain? Surely no one. Theologians, however, tell us that a designer must be "intelligent," that an "intelligent being" must be a person, and that such a person is God. If man needed a designer because he is "intelligent," does not God need a designer because he is "intelligent"? And would not this lead, not to one god, but to an infinite series of gods, each greater and more complicated than the other? Theologians often illustrate the "Design Argument" by reference to the human eye. They could not well choose a worse illustration. Thousands of people have eyes without sight; hundreds of thou-

sands have weak eyes, and are compelled to call science to their aid, in order that they may see small objects at all. Surely an infinitely good God is not the intelligent designer of all eyes—the weak, the blind, as well as the strong? But if nature is designed, how can the author of it be said to combine the attributes of infinite wisdom and goodness? Do not animals live upon each other? Is there not a struggle for existence continuously going on, in which the weak go to the wall? What justice is there in this? An “intelligent designer” of earthquakes pestilence, famine, wars, volcanic eruptions, is surely not all-good! Nature in her mode of action is perfectly reckless. As John Stuart Mill says: “Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed.” Is it nature that does this, or is it the “intelligent designer” of nature? And how can a being be called good who is the author of such wickedness? It is said that the order of the universe demonstrates design. *Per se* there is neither order nor disorder in the universe; but man calls that order which is conformable to his own happiness, and that disorder which causes him misery. Yet everything in the universe acts according to its own inherent properties, and could not act otherwise: the same causes produce the same effects in never-ending succession; and earthquakes and volcanoes follow as necessarily from their causes as a tree, uprooted by the wind, falls into the stream because it cannot maintain its equilibrium. The Design Argument, then, must not be taken only when it points to a good designer: everything must be taken into account; for it is palpably unfair to take the fair things of nature, improved by the art of man, and then argue for a wise and beneficent Deity creator of them. The Theist must take the Design Argument all round: he must not cull the good things out of Nature’s garden to serve his purpose, else the Atheist must insist upon his accounting for the wide waste outside that is pregnant with evils ineradicable.

4. It is not true that all men are conscious of the existence of God. I am unconscious of any such existence,

and thousands of Atheists and Agnostics are alike unconscious. Feeling never can prove anything on a subject like this. Consciousness can never extend to the "unknowable." And so I proclaim myself to be "without God" in the world—a disbeliever in all the gods that men have ever preached. But I am a firm believer in man and in his power to advance. We have had enough of the gods: they have stood in our path and hindered our progress long enough. With our poet, Saladin, let me exclaim :—

" 'Tis not for man to look on high
 For Eden's fabled glow,
 But to clear away the weeds and make
 A Paradise below,
 And to make the world around him
 More holy and more true,
 And a nobler world to live in
 Than e'er his father knew.

" Oh, had man placed his heaven
 On earth instead of sky,
 And had he but discarded God
 For Man to live and die,
 With untold glory in his heart,
 High grandeur on his brow,
 He had himself, poor dreamer,
 Been god-like long ere now."

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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BIBLE SAINTS

AND SINNERS.

BY

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

PART I.

ADAM AND EVE
CAIN AND ABEL
NOAH & THE GIANTS

FATHER ABRAHAM
SAINT ISAAC
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BIBLE SAINTS AND SINNERS.

WITH that shrewd insight into human nature which always characterised him, Thomas Paine pointed out that it was impossible, in dealing with humanity, to draw a line and say, "These are the sheep and these are the goats;" and, therefore, a distinct line of demarcation between "Saints and Sinners" could never be drawn. The greatest saint was not without faults, and the vilest sinner had his good parts. Many of the men and women who were heroes and heroines in their day would, doubtless, seem very disreputable characters if they could appear upon the stage of life now and re-enact before the wondering gaze of man the parts they played in former days. Like the villain of the melodrama of seventy years ago, they would seem very curious creatures, with a strong appetite for human gore. Even the virtuous lover would not be such a model of purity, large-heartedness, and chivalry when seen in other scenes than those in which his sympathy and valour are to be rewarded by the possession of the hand and heart of a fair, innocent, but much-persecuted maiden. To properly test a man's worth, you must not look only at the great things he is able to accomplish, but also at many small things he deliberately neglects. Some only appear well when you know them at a distance, and see them in all their glory. Publicly, these appear noble, courteous, and sympathetic; but their nobility is merely veneer, their sympathy a sham. Know them in every-day life, and you will soon find the hollowness of their pretensions. A great man's wife or secretary seldom thinks him so magnanimous a person as he vainly imagines himself to be. It always was so, I imagine; and human nature, though somewhat improved, has, in this respect, not altered much.

I propose to sketch the characters of some of the Biblical

"Saints and Sinners," and, though the biographers have, no doubt, left out a great deal that was bad concerning them, they were sure to put in all that was good. Let us, then, hold up the mirror of common sense before these Bible heroes, and see what sort of characters, considered apart from all prejudice, are reflected thereon.

Begin, then, with the gentleman and lady who were supposed to have had the honour thrust upon them of being our first parents :—

ADAM AND EVE.

Evidently the biographer did not think it worth his while to give us many particulars respecting these important personages. Childhood they had none; so that their characters were not built up by a long series of efforts to do good, resulting often in failure, which, again, inspired them with determination to persevere until success was at last accomplished. They were created men and women; but clearly they possessed the simplicity of children. They believed in a deity whom they never saw, and were told not to eat of a particular fruit, because, if they did, they would surely die; and, as they knew not what death meant, and apparently did not care, they partook of the fruit, and found it very nice. They were saints for little less than a day, and afterwards the most depraved of sinners.

Except that Eve had a conversation with a talking serpent, and Adam gave names to every "living creature," save his wife, and that they were both turned out of the Garden of Eden, total darkness reigns supreme over the rest of their long and important career. Both lived to a good old age, and contributed appreciably to the increase of the human family; but the Biblical biographer did not think it of sufficient importance to let us know how our first parents brought up their progeny—what principles of morality they instilled into the youthful mind; whether Adam believed in corporal punishment, or thought that the presence of Cain would awe Abel into submission; what Mrs. Adam's opinion was on vaccination, and sundry other matters, which modern biographers never fail to record in giving a faithful narrative of the life and character of some hero belonging to an obscure place on the earth, the very existence of which the majority

of the human race are in sublime ignorance of, and which the remainder care little about.

From our reading of the sacred book, we conclude that, had Adam and Eve remained saints, they would have been the only saints the earth would have ever known; and, as the result of their disobedience was the propagation of their species, our sincere thanks are due, and are hereby tendered, to them for the courage in which they sinned, and afterwards brought forth sinners. And, for myself, I think that it were better that a thousand forbidden apples had been devoured than that there should have been no human race, bad as many of the early specimens undoubtedly were.

CAIN AND ABEL.

Cain and Abel were the first fruits of Adam and Eve's sin. Cain seems early to have taken to farming, and Abel did the less difficult work of minding sheep. Unhappily, both of them paid too much respect to the Hebrew God, who, for obvious reasons, formed a manifest partiality for Abel, and frowned contemptuously upon poor Cain. No doubt Jahveh showed this favour to the younger brother because he fed him well on roast lamb, while Cain thought the fruits of the earth would satisfy Jahveh's wants just as well, without incurring so much expense. Jahveh's disapproval of this proceeding was soon shown in unmistakable fashion. Cain knew it, and felt it. His blood was up; and, in a fit of rage, instead of laughing to scorn this petty exhibition of a deity's favouritism, he met his brother in a field, doubtless wrangled with him, and, in a moment of uncontrollable passion, murdered him.

Abel was a saint. What good thing he ever did is buried with him in the silent tomb of oblivion. Poor Cain was a sinner. Who, having read his story, has not pity for him? Who has not thought that, after all, Abel may have been a provoking fellow? At all events, it is certain that Cain would never have assaulted his brother if it had not been for his sensitive nature and the keen feeling of injustice he experienced from Jahveh, to whom we must refer as the primary cause of the murder.

Turning his back for ever upon the Lord, Cain wended his way into the land of Nod, and committed the horrible

offence of marrying a woman who was not his mother, when there was no other woman in existence ; for which offence theologians, who have often since been asked to solve the enigma, have never forgiven him, and never will, till the crack of doom.

NOAH AND THE GIANTS.

Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years ; and if, as some divines allege, the days in that early period of the world's history were long periods of time, who can estimate the æons and æons of ages that these years may have stretched through ?

Following the first man down to the birth of Noah, came a long line of descendants, the youngest of whom, Enoch, at the time of his death, was three hundred and sixty-five years old ; while the oldest, Methuselah, attained the ripe old age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years before "shuffling off this mortal coil." These gentlemen must have been saints. Nothing concerning their actions is recorded, except in the case of Enoch, who took a walk with God and disappeared mysteriously. Nobody ever heard what became of him ; and, for all we know to the contrary, he may even now be seated on a cloud waiting for an auspicious occasion to re-appear among men. But why should we assume that he went up because he walked with God, when we have Bible authority for the statement that the Deity is as often to be found in the lower regions as in the "mansions in the sky" (Psalm cxxxix). Besides, if God is everywhere, it is only rational to suppose that he is in hell as well as in heaven ; and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he is subject to the tortures of the damned as well as to the joys of the saved.

Lamech begat Noah, and the saints soon passed rapidly away, and the earth became peopled with an ever-increasing multitude of "miserable sinners." This undue amount of wickedness began in this way. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose." The result of this unholy alliance was that giants were born, and every day the people became more and more corrupt, so that the Hebrew God, who was never noted for his great virtue, "repented that he

had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Only one man found favour in Jehovah's eyes, and that was Noah. The biographers describe him as a "just man, perfect in his generation." Heartily glad am I that these writers put in the phrase, perfect "in his generation." His generation! Wonderful, indeed, is the light these words throw upon the text. Certainly a generation when the earth was populated with giants, and the sons of gods amorously embraced the daughters of men and seriously corrupted their morals, could not have been an age when it was a very difficult task to be "just" or "perfect" in the Biblical sense of the term.

There is a limit even to Jehovah's endurance of the wickedness of man; and so, finding that all "flesh was corrupt," and that the earth was "filled with violence," the Lord put his foot down sternly and formed a strong determination to stamp the evil out. The mode in which he resolved to carry out his design was by a deluge to destroy "every living thing;" and no one can doubt that the method would have proved perfectly effectual had it been properly carried out. One family of sinners—though the father was a "perfect man in his generation," and, so far as we can ascertain, was only intoxicated once, when he behaved in a very unbecoming fashion—was allowed to survive the flood. And from these the seeds of corruption have been transmitted to every human breast; and, although happily some seem to have had these sown in barren soil, or watered too liberally with the milk of human kindness, the earth has since been peopled with a few saints and a goodly sprinkling of sinners, whose struggles, crimes, jealousies, selfishness, and heroism have combined to promote the progress, though not the happiness, of the human family. By the flood old and young, rich and poor, good and bad, were killed at one fell swoop. Jehovah had no mercy for the prattling babe at its mother's breast; no pity for the lover ready to sacrifice himself for his dear one's sake. He was equally remorseless in slaying all the animals in whom was the "breath of life," though no bad thing is recorded concerning them. Naturally, when the people had again grown in numbers upon the earth, they resolved unanimously to forestall Deity, should he attempt a second edition of the flood. Being of one language—which

one the biographer sayeth not—they doubtless, at public meeting assembled, passed resolutions against, or rather an amendment to, the Universal Flood's Act, brought in by King Jehovah, seconded by Prime Minister Noah, supported by the whole of his virtuous family—the animals, insects, birds, snakes, and other creatures brought into the ark, assenting; and, having probably, with a few dissentients, carried the amendment, commenced to put their revolutionary scheme into definite shape by making bricks, beginning operations by laying the foundation-stone of a city and tower, “whose top should reach unto heaven.” Vile sinners these! consummate knaves! They little thought that King Jehovah (more elevated than the House of Lords) would soon come down and confound their knavish tricks, scattering his enemies over the face of the earth.

Having had the awful intelligence communicated to him that the people had commenced building operations (who the common informer was the Lord alone knoweth), Jehovah betook himself down to the people's House of Commons (the earth), and found that the information was perfectly true—that the amendment had really been carried. Speechless with indignation, his eyes darting out of their sockets, his eyebrows lowered with desperation, Jehovah began mysteriously to confuse their tongues. As the biographers have not told us how this was effected, we are each left to formulate a theory for ourselves.

For the following hypothesis I alone am responsible. These “wicked sinners” had, probably, on beholding Jehovah making his appearance through the clouds, put their thumbs to their noses and extended their fingers at him, some probably being rude enough to put out their tongues. This unseemly conduct so enraged the Hebrew Deity that he waxed wrath against them; and, in return, they spoke in more forcible language than they were accustomed to address towards him, supplementing their statements with such vigorous and impolite adjectives that it might have been mistaken for a “new tongue;” and thus the confusion is explained. But, if the theologians think that Deity did in reality cause the people to speak in new languages and stop their work, they are welcome to their theory. There is only this difficulty about it—that is, that not only would each one not understand the other, but, speaking a

new language for the first time, each of them would not understand himself. Language is only learned by experience; and experience, I am sure, will teach every man that my theory is much more rational than that of the theologian.

FATHER ABRAHAM.

Though the Rev. Robert Taylor, Sir William Drummond, and other eminent writers of their school, have contended, with a good show of reason, that Abraham was not an historical personage at all, but merely a myth founded upon Chaldean astrology, I, who have to deal with Christians who believe in the real existence of "Father Abraham," and count him as foremost among a long line of saints since the flood, see no utility in arguing with them the question of whether the Hebrew word representing Abram simply means the "father of nations," not in a literal but an astronomical sense; but consider it more wise to take it for granted that, "once upon a time" a man named Abraham did live, and ascertain how far the records relating to his career warrant the belief that he was a good man, rather than waste time in putting forth a theory that few could understand, and fewer accept, even if they did. In common with other Biblical characters, there is surrounding Abraham's—or, rather, Abram's—birthplace considerable uncertainty. He was, however, born somewhere, for his father, Terah, "came forth from Ur of the Chaldees," and ultimately settled at a place called Haran.

Abraham, it seems, was a long time reaching manhood; and when his father died, at the ripe age of two hundred and five years, Abraham had only then attained his seventy-fifth year, though, in the ordinary course of things, he ought to have been at least one hundred and thirty years old. But, in those days, when it was not a very extraordinary occurrence for the sun—which, so far as this earth is concerned, never moves—to stand still, it could surely be no difficult matter to put a person's age back a few years, just as modern spinsters out of their teens do when it suits their purpose.

After the death of Terah, the Lord had a consultation with Abraham, at which, like the leaders of great political parties, he made a good many promises which he never

intended to fulfil. He told him that he would make of him a "great nation" (Exodus xii. 2); "that he would bless him, and curse those who cursed him; and that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Not a single particle of this promise has been fulfilled; and yet the Jews, who in most things are a most sagacious people, cling ardently to Jehovah, who, so far from making them a great nation, has allowed them to be scattered broadcast over the face of the earth, maltreated, robbed, and bitterly persecuted, in whatsoever country they have for a brief period located themselves.

Taking his brother's son, Lot, with him, Abraham departed from Haran, and went thence into Canaan, settling with his family upon the plains of Horeb, where the Lord re-appeared to him; and, being the only landlord in those days, promised to make a deed of gift of this portion of the land to Abraham's seed; whereupon Abraham, feeling much flattered, built an altar unto the Lord in consideration of his great kindness. But neither Abraham nor his children stayed in the land for long. Being of a roving disposition, he journeyed from place to place; and, as shortly after taking possession the Lord was cruel enough to send a grievous famine in the land, Abraham speedily made his way to Egypt for a brief holiday.

Getting fairly into Egypt, Abraham began to entertain strong fears lest his beautiful young wife—who at this time was doubtless in the bloom of womanhood, being only slightly over sixty years of age—should present such charms to the ordinary Egyptian minds as to compel them to be irresistibly smitten by her. Overpowered by these thoughts, and fearing lest the ardent youth who should fall in love with Sarah would not stop short of killing him to effect his purpose, Abraham, with saintly ingenuity, persuaded his wife to say that "she was his sister," and thus, by a white lie, save his head. No sooner, however, did the Egyptians set eyes upon Sarah than they were, with one accord, profoundly impressed by her grace and beauty; and, introducing the young lady first to some "masher princes," the Egyptians ultimately brought her to the court of the ruling Pharaoh, who, beholding that she was fair, "entreated Abraham well for her sake," and took her into his fond embrace.

In our days this conduct of Father Abraham's would be

described as "letting a wife out for improper purposes;" but, as this Jewish saint, after the transaction, was "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis xiii. 2), he was not in the least hurt, but rather pleased with the result. As for poor Pharaoh, who thought he had honestly purchased Abraham's sister, if only temporarily, he was plagued with great plagues, he and the whole of his household, as a punishment for entering into the disreputable bargain.

So Abraham and his wife and Lot and his family left Egypt, and journeyed to a spot between Beth-el and Hai. Here the two families divided the land between them; but, as it seemed insufficient to accommodate all their cattle, their herdsmen squabbled, and Abraham and Lot exchanged a few angry words and religiously parted.

Years after, when Lot had got into difficulties and was taken prisoner by four powerful kings, who apparently did not believe in the principle of allowing common people to possess the land, Abraham, who had showed himself to be such a contemptible coward in his dealings with Pharaoh, armed his servants, and, acting himself in the capacity of commander, led his army on to victory, not only defeating his opponents ignominiously and regaining possession of all the goods, but getting even the warm congratulations of the King of Sodom, who had fallen previously in the battle; but who, disdaining to die like a common soldier, fled, and on meeting Abraham greeted him with a blessing (Genesis xiv. 10-12).

On several occasions the Lord appeared to Abraham, and renewed his promises to make of him "a great nation," so often, indeed, that the hoary-headed old gentleman, who was yet childless, began to have grave doubts as to whether, after all, Jehovah was only poking fun at him. Now, though Abraham's wife, Sarah, had no children, this Hebrew saint had in his house an Egyptian handmaid, named Hagar, who seemed likely to bear him a child, which caused Sarah no small amount of displeasure.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared again to him and made a few more promises, instituting the rite of circumcision, and winding up with the declaration that Abraham's wife should yet bear him a son, at which statement Abraham, being extremely tickled, laughed outright. Sarah, too, who was only ninety-nine years of

age when she heard the news, "laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also" ? (Genesis xviii. 11, 12).

In the process of time we are informed that Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son, whose name was called Isaac. Hagar also bore him a son, Ishmael, and, when this latter interesting event was fully accomplished, Sarah's displeasure had developed into a pronounced form of hatred against Hagar. The green-eyed monster, jealousy, having taken strong possession of Sarah's bosom, she maliciously induced her husband to turn the hand-maiden with her babe adrift—turn her into the cold, heartless world, that she and her offspring might perish. To this advice Abraham readily listened, and allowed it to be put into effect with the concurrence of the Lord; and there is not one word throughout the whole of the Bible in condemnation of this cruel conduct.

Before the birth of Isaac the Lord had heard that Sodom and Gomorrah were in a very bad way, and, being omniscient, he came down from heaven to see if the report that had been communicated to him was true. In every particular he found it correct, and determined, therefore, to destroy these cities. Abraham stood before him and tried to strike a bargain with him, and, in true Jewish fashion, continued to reduce his terms until he persuaded the Lord, who is immutable, to change his mind rather frequently—until, indeed, he consented not to destroy these cities if ten righteous persons could be found in them. But the Lord, being all-wise, knew that the ten would not be forthcoming. So, after the "baiting" was over, he solemnly took his departure. Immediately following this event, two angels paid a visit to Lot, and while at his house some vile scoundrels came outside and implored Lot to let the angels or men come out, that they might commit an unnameable crime against them. Lot, though not a very moral man himself, protested against such wickedness; and soon Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by the Lord, who rained from heaven a heavy supply of brimstone and fire. Lot, however, escaped; but his wife, who—imprudently and against special instructions—turned back to see how the conflagration was raging, was turned into a pillar of salt.

When Isaac had grown into a promising youth the Lord

determined to put Abraham's faith to a critical test. Of course, he knew that "father Abraham" was faithful above all things; but he resolved to have his faith tried by experiment. He, therefore, directed Abraham to take his only son, whose seed he had promised to make a great nation, and sacrifice him upon an altar. Abraham unhesitatingly consented, and, saddling an ass, proceeded on the following day to a mountain in the land of Moriah, which was the place appointed by the Lord for the perpetration of the deed. And now Isaac is stretched upon the altar; the faggots are piled about him; the knife is outstretched, and a father's hand is descending to destroy his innocent son, when, lo! a voice is heard from the clouds. The Lord is satisfied, and a ram is sacrificed in place of Isaac. To the ordinary mind, this reads very like the plot of an East-end drama; but we are assured that it is all Gospel, and woe be unto him who insinuates that it is not true, for he shall be numbered among the Lord's enemies, and verily in the next world he shall receive his reward.

SAINT ISAAC.

Abraham could not die comfortably without first taking steps to ensure the marriage of his son, "Saint Isaac," with a woman of his own country; for, if there was one thing more than another upon which Abraham had made a strong resolution, it was that his dear boy should not become attached to any "of the daughters of the Canaanites." Consequently, before giving up the ghost, Abraham despatched a servant off with young Isaac into the City of Nahor, with special instructions to introduce him to the daughter of some good man with a view to matrimony. Faithfully the servant carried out his master's instructions, and soon we find the youthful Jewish saint wooing Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, by the side of a well. Getting an introduction to his sweetheart's brother, Laban, Isaac soon found himself comfortably lodged in Bethuel's house, and the courtship—Rebekah being fair and Isaac being simple—proceeded as merrily as a marriage-bell; the servant enlivening the proceedings by explaining in narrative form the reason of his mission.

When an engagement between Isaac and the fair damsel

had been fully agreed upon and solemnly sworn to—as there was no law providing for breach of promise in those days—Abraham's servant, accompanied by Isaac, Rebekah, and her nurse, returned homewards—Isaac arriving, it would seem, not only in time to celebrate his own marriage, but to congratulate his father on his second matrimonial venture, and embrace his new mother, Keturah. Soon after this we are assured that Abraham “gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people” (Genesis xxv. 8).

For some little time after his marriage Isaac was not blessed with children; but when, at last, the young ones came, they made their appearance rapidly enough. Jacob followed Esau in rapid succession, helping himself into the world by the assistance of Esau's heel. And perhaps it will be convenient, while I am recording the virtues of Isaac, to treat also of the lives and characters of Saint Jacob and the Sinner Esau, his sons, with whose history Isaac's is inextricably bound up.

Now, Jacob and Esau were born to Rebekah, who had been barren for nineteen years, on account of Jacob's frequent wrestling with the Lord in prayer; and, before the youngsters were born, the Lord, who is no respecter of persons, decreed that “the elder should serve the younger” (Genesis xxv. 23). When the boys had grown, Esau developed into “a cunning hunter, a man of the field;” but “Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.” Isaac, it appears, took a liking to Esau, but apparently for a very peculiar reason, which was, as we are informed, “because he did eat of his venison;” but Rebekah loved Jacob, and, as no reason is assigned for her loving the younger better than the elder boy, we must suppose that she did so because Isaac showed a partiality for his son and heir—or, rather, his hairy son—Esau, if we may say so without vulgarity. One day Esau had been working laboriously at his occupation, and came fainting from the fields. Meeting his brother, he besought of him to feed him with pottage, lest he die. Jacob, taking a mean advantage of his brother's critical condition, entered into a one-sided bargain with him, by which he induced him to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage.

But the Lord loved Jacob, and no doubt admired this his

first great commercial speculation ; but any ordinary sinner would regard it as a cruel, mean, and contemptible trick, deserving of the severest condemnation.

On account of a famine being in the land presided over by the all-wise God, Isaac took his departure to Gerar ; and here occurred a faithful imitation of his father's conduct towards Pharaoh. Seeing that Rebekah was still a fair damsel of only sixty summers, Isaac piously informed the "men of the place" that she was his sister. Whereupon Abimelech, King of the Philistines, was immediately infatuated by her, and sought to excite her tender affections towards himself. Looking out of a window, to his amazement, Abimelech beheld Isaac "sporting with Rebekah," and, being a 'cute monarch, he reasoned within himself in the following strain : "This cannot be his [Isaac's] sister : if it were, he never would sport about with her in that fashion. Now, if it were his country cousin, or his young wife, I could understand such conduct ; but to say it is his sister will not do at all." So Abimelech called to Isaac, and made him acknowledge the falseness of his statement. He also very properly censured him for exposing Rebekah and the amorous young men of the city to such strong temptations. As for the Lord, he had no word of blame for Saint Isaac, but blessed and prospered him in all his undertakings.

At the age of forty Esau took unto himself, for comfort's sake, a couple of wives. But these ladies were the cause of great grief of mind to Isaac by their mother-in-law, Rebekah, who, doubtless, objected to her son rushing into matrimony at such an early age, and just, perhaps, when his earnings were a very appreciable augmentation of the family income.

But now Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, and he felt the unwelcome approach of the reaper Death. Calling his eldest son to him, he bade him "take his bow, and go into the field and take some venison," and make some savoury meat, such as he loved, that he might bless him before he died. Rebekah, hearing Isaac's command, secretly informed Jacob, with whose aid she ingeniously devised a scheme to deceive her dying husband. What saintly conduct ! How unlike the ordinary every-day mother and wife !

Rebekah bade Jacob go to the flock and procure two kids

of goats ; and from these she resolved to make "savoury meat," such as her husband loved. This, however, did not complete her plan. Jacob was to take the meat to his father, and, having prepared himself by covering his neck and hands with the goat-skins, declare that he was Esau, the first-born ; and thus, by a trick, get the blessing—whatever that was worth—intended for his brother.

With a lie upon his lips, Jacob stole into the presence of his blind old father before Esau had returned from hunting, and, declaring that he was his "very son Esau," procured the much-needed blessing and departed, being too much of a coward to face his brother and boldly tell him what he had done.

When Esau returned he hurriedly converted the venison into "savoury meat," and brought it to his father ; and when his dying parent told him that some cunning person had been, and, representing himself as Esau, had procured the blessing, Esau fell on his knees and cried with a bitter cry : "Bless me, even me, O my father."

On hearing from his father that it was Jacob who had defrauded him out of his blessing, Esau shrewdly remarked : "Is he not rightly named Jacob [which in Hebrew means deceiver] ? for," said he, "he has supplanted me these two times : he took away my birthright, and behold' now he has taken away my blessing." Any ordinary father would have revoked a blessing fraudulently obtained, and pronounced a fresh one upon the head of him to whom it was due ; but Saint Isaac stolidly refused to bless him. He told him that he had made Jacob lord over Esau, and made all his brethren his servants. Smarting under this cruel injustice, Esau rose and departed from his father's presence, swearing eternal hatred and speedy vengeance upon his brother's head.

Warned by his mother that Esau intended to kill him, Jacob fled and made his way to Padan-aram ; and, as it is necessary to give some account, however brief, of this journey and the events that occurred on the road, and of what Jacob did on arriving at his destination, we take leave of this ancient saint for a while in the midst of his walking tour, and propose to catch him on the journey in the next chapter.



BIBLE SAINTS

AND SINNERS.

BY

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

PART II.

<i>Saint Jacob—(Continued from</i>	<i>Pious Dreams and Saintly In-</i>
<i>Part I.)</i>	<i>terpreters</i>
<i>Saint Joseph and his Brethren</i>	<i>Jacob's Death</i>

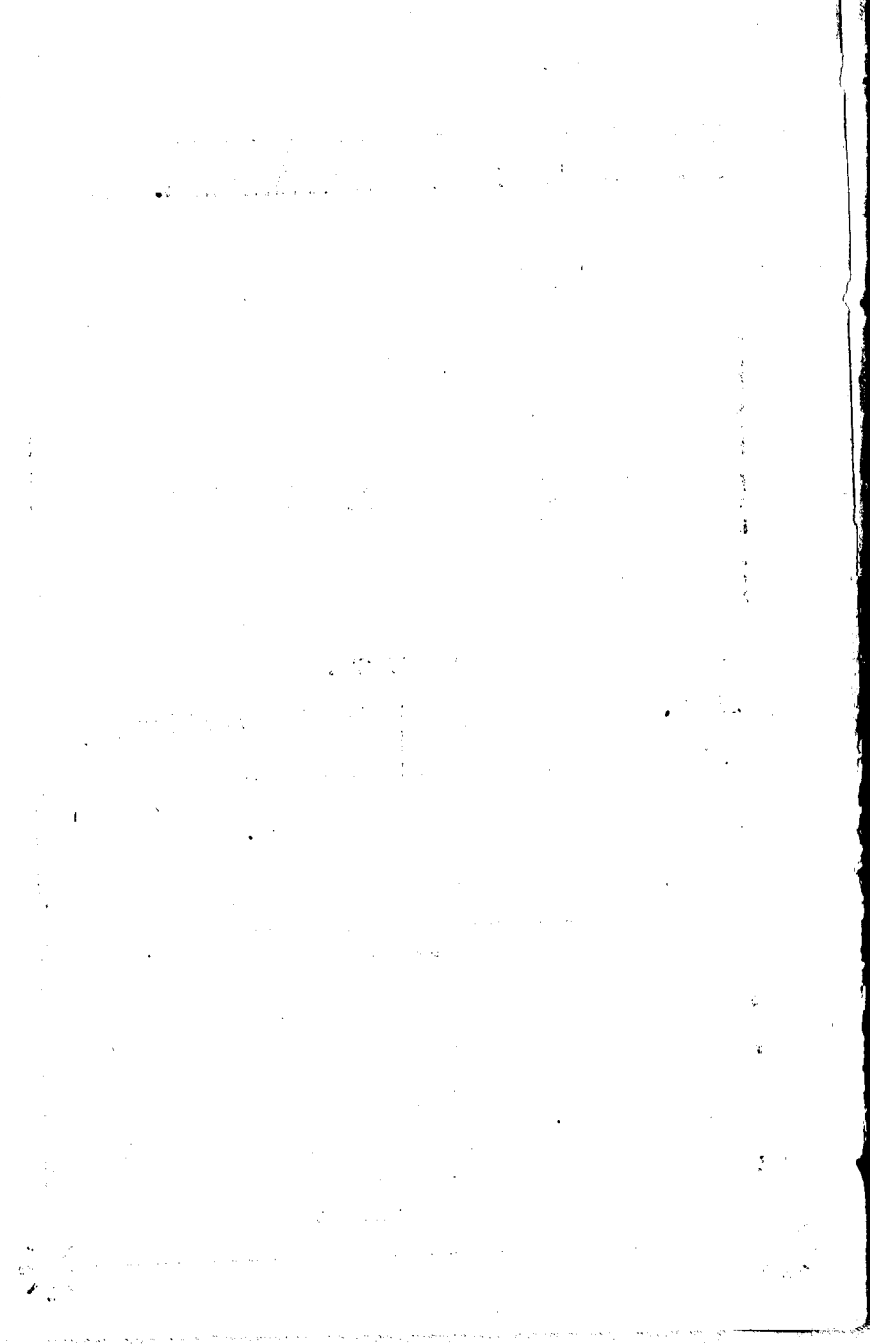


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BIBLE SAINTS AND SINNERS.

PART II.

IN our last chapter we left Saint Jacob just as he was about to commence a journey, and we promised to overtake him on the road. Jacob started on his journey to Padan-Aram, whither he was going to get out of the reach of his elder brother, and also in search of a wife. Jacob "lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night." Taking a number of stones, he arranged them in order and used them for a pillow. Upon these he laid down to rest, and, being no doubt in an uncomfortable posture, he dreamed a dream; or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, he had a pleasant sort of vision. In this dream Jacob beheld a wonderful sight. He saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven, and upon it were a number of angels ascending and descending in acrobatic fashion by way of amusement. The Lord, too, comported himself gracefully upon the topmost rung, and, from this elevated position, delivered, to the dreaming Jew below, a short lecture, in which, among other things, he told him he would give to his seed the land whereon he then lay; that his seed should be as the dust of the earth, and spread in all quarters of the earth, and sundry other promises, that remain unfulfilled to the present day. When Jacob—who attached a great deal of importance to his dream—awoke he made this sapient remark: "Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," which clearly shows that the Deity in whom this cunning Jewish saint believed had not the characteristic ascribed to him by modern theologians—of omnipresence.

After anointing and naming the place whereon he had slept, or rather had dreamed, Jacob ventured to strike a bargain with the Lord, which, upon the face of it, looks more true than many of the statements in the inspired

biographer's record. Here it is. Pious Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God." A splendid bargain this! Reasonable enough, too, from Jacob's standpoint. All he required was that, before he should own any indebtedness to the Lord, the Lord, as a guarantee of good faith, should provide him with food and raiment, and, if he refused to fulfil these requirements, he was a God who was not worth having.

At length Jacob reached his destination, and, having made sundry inquiries for the abode of Laban, was introduced by some shepherds to Laban's youngest daughter, Rachel, who had come down to a well to water her father's sheep. Gallantly rolling away a stone from the mouth of the well, Jacob assisted Rachel to water the flock, and, when this was accomplished, he kissed the young lady, and then, as though reproving himself for what he had done, "he lifted up his voice and wept."

Jacob in tears must indeed have been an impressive sight! An honest Iago snivelling is something for God to exult over. Rachel's tender heart was touched in a moment. When Jacob had explained to Rachel that he was related to her, and various other matters which it is not important to state here, the young lady brought him to her father, who embraced him, and soon Jacob was comfortably established as a lodger in Laban's house. Being a very good business man, Laban at once made a most sensible proposal to Jacob. He said: "Because thou art my brother, shouldst thou, therefore, serve me for nought? Tell me what shall thy wages be?" What could be fairer?

Now Laban, who was as sagacious an old Jew as ever made a bargain or took an oath, had two daughters—Rachel, the younger, being fair and beautiful to look upon, while Leah, the elder, had some unpleasant defect in her optical organs, or, as the inspired writer delicately puts it, "was tender eyed." Jacob, it would seem, at first sight, had fallen desperately in love with Rachel, and when the above question as to the wages he should require for his labour was mooted Jacob said he should be satisfied to give seven years of service in return for the hand and heart of Laban's

youngest daughter. Laban readily assented. At the expiration of seven years, however, he gave a feast, and at night in the dark, or while Jacob was unusually elated with the holy spirit, Laban palmed his eldest daughter upon him, and he did not discover the deception till he awoke next morning, and found, to his amazement, that he had married the "tender-eyed" girl after all. Naturally, Jacob was very much annoyed, not only at finding that he had taken the wrong woman for partner, but probably his annoyance was increased by the horrible thought that it was possible for anybody to dupe so intelligent a "child of God" as he flattered himself to be.

On seeing Laban next morning Jacob doubtless had a "few words" with him on the subject, and Laban ingeniously replied that it was not customary for parents in that part of the world to allow the young daughter to be married until the elder ones had been "got off their hands," and that, therefore, if Jacob wanted Rachel, he must perform another term of service in order to win her. This Jacob consented to do. At the termination of another seven years Jacob found himself the happy husband of two wives, master of two handmaids, and the father of a young and increasing family. By a dexterous elimination of the "speckled and spotted" among Laban's cattle, Jacob managed in a brief period to amass a considerable amount of wealth, and, having offended his father-in-law by robbing him wholesale in most pious and saintly fashion, departed from Padan-Aram to journey back to the land of his birth.

Rachel also acted very shabbily towards her father; for, while he was gone to shear his sheep, she purloined "his gods," and, what was worse, was actually wicked enough to sit on them.

Laban, learning that his son-in-law had secretly fled, pursued and overtook him; and, had not God paid Laban a visit in a dream, he no doubt would have had the thief Jacob handed over to the local police and charged him with felony; and, if the stealing of gods is a criminal offence, his daughter might have been included in the charge. But the Lord persuaded Laban not to be rash, and, whatever he did, not to speak harshly to his dishonest son-in-law.

Having, then, arranged matters satisfactorily, Jacob was released and took his departure, but had not proceeded far

before he was met on the way by the "angels of God," whom he saluted in familiar fashion. Though the inspired record does not say so, it seems that these angels communicated the fact that, if Jacob continued his course, he could not avoid meeting his brother Esau. Coward to the last, Jacob dared not boldly face his brother; he therefore sent messengers to him, offering to bribe him with oxen, etc. Having offered up a short prayer to the god of his fathers, in which he promised to deal well with him if he was protected from the assaults of his brother, Jacob continued his journey, and on his way he met with an angel of the Lord, the Lord himself, or a man—the inspired record leaves the reader the option of paying his money and taking his choice—with which mysterious being he had a wrestling match and was defeated, his antagonist unfairly kicking him in "the hollow of his thigh."

Shortly after the two brothers met face to face—the saint and the sinner; and Esau had now an opportunity of reeking vengeance upon his brother's head; but, like the good, tender-hearted fellow that he was, forgot all about his early hatreds, and generously forgave pious Jacob, and "fell on his neck and kissed him." What splendid magnanimity! What admirable forbearance! And this the first meeting after the great injustice committed against him at his dying father's bedside. There is no word of praise to be found throughout the whole Bible for this generous conduct. Think of it, ye modern saints, and exult! Think of it; and when ye see an Infidel whose life is pure, whose aims are lofty, struggling against overwhelming difficulties, slander him, deprive him of his birthright as a citizen, assume thyself to be made of better stuff than he, and assuredly the Lord will be with ye to comfort and praise ye in all such saintly undertaking wheresoever ye go.

SAINT JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

When I was a young and pious student of Biblical subjects, and attended Sunday school and church regularly every week, I thought that the story of Joseph the dreamer, who was sold by his wicked brothers for a few pieces of silver, and his coat of many colours dipped into blood in order to induce old Jacob to believe that his favourite son

had been slain by some ferocious beast hungering for human flesh, the most dramatic and interesting of all the stories in the Bible. Certainly the plot shows some little ingenuity, and would probably have been often used by dramatic authors if the story had appeared in any other book. To the dramatist, however, sacred subjects are virtually prohibited. He is specially requested to collect his materials from incidents of daily life, or, if he must draw upon his imagination, to make his characters as unlike the ancient personages represented in sacred books as he possibly can. If, however, there must be some similarity, so completely intertwined must it be with something else of an altogether different character that all resemblance is lost amid a multitude of small details.

Reading the Bible afresh in the clear light of rational thought, I still regard the story of Joseph as essentially dramatic and full of interest, not that I regard "Saint Joseph" to be a hero whose nobility of nature or fine feeling commands admiration, but rather on account of the probability of the story, the skill with which it is told, and the strange and fascinating interests involved in it.

Saint Joseph was the eldest son of Jacob by his favourite wife Rachel, who bore him only two sons, the younger of whom was called Benjamin. At the age of seventeen young Joseph seems to have brought upon himself the hatred and condemnation of his brothers by the arrogant assumption that he had been specially designed by the dear God of his father to rule over his brethren.

Jacob seemed to be exceedingly proud of the lad Joseph, and, as a special mark of his favour, made for him a "coat of many colours," that, like the thoughtless, æsthetical young men of modern times, he might, on auspicious occasions, strut proudly before his less favoured brethren.

Joseph was a dreamer and an interpreter of dreams. When he had dreamed a pleasant dream he invariably interpreted it to mean that he was to be lord over his brothers; and, as they probably failed to see either sense or utility in the dream, and disbelieved entirely in the interpretation of it, Joseph very early began to "get himself disliked." In the first dream Joseph saw himself in a field, and his sheaf of corn "arose and stood upright," like the walking-stick at Maskelyne and Cooke's, and the sheaves which his brethren

had come and made obeisance to it. In the second vision Joseph saw the sun, moon, and stars playing peculiar pranks in the heavens—metaphorically speaking, taking off their hats and bowing servilely to him. One day, having been sent by his father into the field to see how his brothers were getting on with their work, his brethren descried him coming across a field, and conspired among themselves as to the best method of ridding themselves for ever of this vain dreamer of a brother. Some wickedly suggested that they should murder him, and cast his body into a pit, and say that some wild beast had devoured him; but Reuben, the eldest son by Leah, condemned this project, wisely urging them to “shed no blood,” but merely to consign him into a pit; and, from the narrative, it is clear that Reuben intended to rescue and bring him in triumph to his home. The resolution to kill him having been abandoned, the men took Joseph, stripped him of his coat of variegated colours, and plunged him into an empty pit; but presently, seeing a company of Ishmaelites coming in that direction on their way to Egypt, with camels bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, they bethought themselves that they might, perhaps, do a good stroke of business by selling their brother, and thus get a good price and rid themselves of an objectionable personage at the same time. Accepting “twenty pieces of silver” as fair payment for the dreamer of dreams, Joseph’s brethren proceeded to further carry out their original design by killing a kid and dipping the aforesaid coat into it, and returned to their father with the wretched story of the finding of the coat and the horrible suggestion of the destruction of their brother by some wild beast. Incredible as it may seem—knowing, as we now do, the wonderful insight Jacob had into human character—he believed the story at once, and was so deeply affected by the news that the sorrow found immediate expression in the customary practice of rending his clothes and the putting on sackcloth and sitting miserably in ashes for several days.

But, turning again to Joseph, we find that, soon after he had been taken from the pit, Reuben, who had been watching his brethren’s doings, put in an appearance, and, finding that Joseph was not there, wept bitterly; and it is a little strange that, knowing his brothers’ intentions, he did not at once go to his father and acquaint him of the

conversation he had heard in the morning, and spoil the "wild beast story" by telling Jacob how the thing was proposed to be done.

In most modern dramas there are what are called comic scenes, in which persons whose connection with the story is often very remote come on and say a few funny things, or go through a little eccentric business, while the serious scenes are being prepared. But in the present story there is nothing of this sort; indeed, we find that the next chapter mainly consists of a narration of the obscene conduct of Onan, Judah, and other pious blackguards, whose notions of morality may have been very good in their day, but would scarcely be regarded as admirable in the nineteenth century, except among parsons of the type of the Rev. Mr. Hughes, of Birmingham, who may have religiously taken them as models of purity and virtue.

The second scene is laid at Pottiphar's house. Here Joseph seems to have got employment as general "utility" man; but, as Mrs. Pottiphar appears to have wished Joseph, among his manifold duties, to share her bed with him—an honour which he judiciously declined—he was through her thrown into gaol by his master, who persisted in thinking him guilty of the crime which the young Hebrew had manfully scorned to commit. While in gaol the Lord was with him, and even the prison officials conferred upon Joseph the office of doorkeeper. In gaol, at this time, were the butler and baker of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, where they appeared to have been consigned for the heinous crime of offending their lord and master. It is easy to understand that, not having arrived at that high state of civilisation necessary for the introduction of the "plank" bed, and having to be satisfied with the cold stones for a pillow, the butler and the baker naturally dreamed at night—as naturally, indeed, as we should get rheumatic pains in our limbs under similar circumstances. Puzzled exceedingly by their dreams, these unfortunate men became sad, and were not satisfied until they induced Joseph, the professional interpreter, to explain the meaning of them, which he did, being careful enough to affirm beforehand that interpretations "belonged only to God," lest they might give him into custody after his release on some charge of trickery. What these extraordinary dreams were, and how the young Jew interpreted them, we shall soon see.

PIOUS DREAMS AND SAINTLY INTERPRETERS.

By profession Saint Joseph was an interpreter of dreams—a pious occupation, which seems to have gone altogether out of date since the introduction of a free Press and of a little common sense into the affairs of mankind.

The small minds of the butler and baker of King Pharaoh's establishment being very much disturbed by dreams, they came to Joseph for consolation and advice. Requesting the butler to relate his dream, Joseph listened while his fellow prisoner told a cock-and-bull story about a vine with three branches which budded and blossomed, and from which clusters of fine ripe grapes grew. In his hand the butler dreamt he held Pharaoh's cup, into which vessel he pressed the grapes and gave unto his master.

Then the baker told his story. He dreamt he had three baskets on his head (no wonder he dreamt; the marvel is he did not have a nightmare), and in the topmost basket were all sorts of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and birds came, attracted probably by the savoury perfume that filled the air, and actually ate out of the baskets as he carried them along.

Knowing the crass ignorance of the two dreamers, Saint Joseph was at once ready to give the interpretation of these childish visions. Joseph told the butler that the interpretation of his dream was this:—In three days, which were represented by the three branches, the butler would be re-instated in his office in Pharaoh's establishment, and would, doubtless, have frequent occasion to present his master with the cup after the fashion of his dream. Having thus pleasantly told the butler his "fortune," Joseph thought that he might just as well say a few words in his own behalf. In true Hebrew fashion he metaphorically presented his card to the butler, and bade him "think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."

The butler was well pleased, and the baker, doubtlessly thinking that he would share the good fortune of his companion, besought of Joseph to give him the interpretation of his dream. Complying readily with this request, Joseph informed the baker that the three baskets represented three

days; that in three days Pharaoh would require the poor baker's head; and that, with that view, he would be hanged upon a tree and his body devoured by birds. How the baker received the interpretation the Bible saith not; neither does it say that Joseph presented his compliments to the baker and wished to be remembered by him to Pharaoh; but at the end of the three days, on the king's birthday, the interpretation of both dreams was fulfilled, the butler being re-instated in his position, and the poor baker consigned to a premature and violent death by strangulation.

Like most persons who have a kindness shown to them, the butler, in the hour of prosperity, forgot the friend by whose assistance he was elevated to his former position. Saint Joseph, therefore, remained in durance vile for two years more, until Pharaoh took it into his head to dream, and would not suffer his perturbed mind to rest until he knew the meaning of his visions. Suddenly the butler bethought himself of Joseph, and recommended him to the notice of his master. Then Pharaoh sent for the Hebrew prisoner, and related his dream to him, which was as follows:—He saw himself by the side of a river, "And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river; and the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine." This wonderful vision having passed before him in "his mind's eye," Pharaoh awoke; presently, however, the pious monarch dozed again and dreamed a second edition of the same dream. In fact, it was merely a change of metaphor. In the second dream Pharaoh saw seven full ears of corn devoured by seven lean ones; and, naturally, having witnessed such an extraordinary event, his spirit was sorely "troubled." He sent for the magicians and all the "wise men" of Egypt; but none of these could reveal the meaning of the strange vision. Why Pharaoh should send for "wise men" to interpret dreams it is somewhat difficult to understand, since wise men have always considered it prudent to speak only on those matters of which they have a definite knowledge; but Pharaoh's magicians must have been

poor specimens of the "profession" if they could not supply an answer to so easy a riddle as that put to them by their king and master. Even Lord Dundreary would have solved such a simple enigma to his own satisfaction. Now, if Pharaoh had seen the fat swallow the lean kine, all the wise men would have been ready at once with an interpretation. They would unquestionably have brought forward living proof that such was an every-day occurrence in the world; they would have pointed to fat priests whose voracity was wonderful, who not only were fed sumptuously every day, but virtually preyed on the lean sheep of their flock; they would have pointed to the corpulent aristocrats about the court; to obese landlords and thin tenants; to the plump slave-owners and lean slaves; and, if they were not afraid of offending his gracious majesty, they might have wound up by pointing to kings who devoured the substance produced by the toil and suffering of an oppressed and servile people.

Pharaoh's dream relating to the lean kine that devoured the fat was so extraordinary that Saint Joseph had to be called upon the scene as the only person likely to unravel the mystery. After the manner of modern saints, Joseph gave all the glory to the Lord; in other words, he gave God the credit, and took whatever advantage resulted from the action for himself. If God deigned to supply the interpretation, he would first of all reveal it unto Joseph, which would, of course, serve two purposes: it would show that Joseph was on terms of intimacy with Deity, and that the Lord meant him to fulfil a high mission on earth. A telegraphic or phonographic communication having been received direct from Jehovah, Joseph proceeded to tell Pharaoh the interpretation of his dream. As any fool might have guessed, Joseph told Pharaoh that the dream was "one;" that he had seen two representations of one drama, the last one being a "new reading" of the first. The seven fat kine and the seven full ears of corn meant each seven years, and the seven thin kine and the seven thin ears of corn meant each seven years more; and this wonderful vision was intended by God to warn Pharaoh that there would be seven years of agricultural prosperity in Egypt, which would be followed by seven years' famine; and that, if the king were wise, he would appoint some trustworthy person, to store up, out of the abundance produced during the first period, enough to

feed the population, and, if need be, supply others, during the second period.

Now, if the dream was to come true, who could Pharaoh more appropriately choose as "store-keeper" than Saint Joseph, to whom he was indebted for the interpretation of the dream? Accordingly, Joseph was at once appointed to the office, and, in due course, the dream was fulfilled. How could it be otherwise? If one writes a play, one would be a veritable ass not to make the incidents work together to produce the desired result. It was a necessary incident in this Biblical drama that Joseph should be placed in a position of responsibility in Egypt; for, when the seven years of plenty had passed away, Joseph's brethren—the villains of the story—were to come to Egypt to buy corn, and it would serve no purpose to bring them on the scene unless they were introduced to the hero, their brother, in all his glorious prosperity.

The scenes change in quick succession; the seven years of plenty come and go. Storehouses are filled to overflowing, and Pharaoh's heart is rejoiced. Soon, however, the seven dreary years of famine are upon the Egyptians; and now dear old Jacob, bent with age and tottering to the grave, and fearful lest he and his family should die of starvation—the famine extending as far as Canaan—determines to send all his sons, save Benjamin, into Egypt for the purpose of buying food, that he and his household "might live and not die." Coming into the presence of Joseph, his brothers implored of him to allow them to purchase corn; and, as they did not recognise him, though he did them, he spoke roughly to them, and charged them with being "spies," who had come to Egypt to "see the nakedness of the land," which, considering that Canaan was as equally barren at the time, would have been a very stupid thing for them to have done. With one accord Joseph's brothers unbosomed themselves, and told him that they were the sons of one man; that they had another brother at home, and one had gone "over to the majority." "Ha!" thought Joseph, "now I shall be able to have some fun at their expense. I should like to see my dad and young Benjamin very much; therefore, I will have one of them detained in prison, and send the others back with corn to Canaan with special instructions that Simeon shall not be released until Benjamin is brought

hither." After much murmuring, Joseph's wicked brothers consented to this arrangement, which it was pretended was necessary to demonstrate that they were "no spies." Accordingly, the nine sons returned to their father and told him the unpleasant news; but judge of their increased bewilderment when, on opening their sacks, each man found that his money had been returned to him! One might here not unnaturally ask whether Joseph was the proprietor of the corn stored away in Egypt, or whether he merely took care of it for Pharaoh; but this might lead to other questions, which it would be considered exceedingly wicked even to suggest to the minds of the earnest believer, and, therefore, I refrain from committing the heinous offence. As for poor old Jacob, he made up his mind that some frightful plot had been planned against him, and that nothing should induce him to part with Benjamin; for, said he, "his brother is dead, and if mischief should now befall him.....it would bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Both Reuben and Judah spoke up right bravely, and said that they would be surety for the safety of the lad, and, after a good deal of persuasion, the old man consented to let Benjamin go.

And now the last scene of all in this interesting drama is to be enacted. Benjamin is brought before Joseph, and, though greatly moved, he resolves to bring down the curtain on a much finer tableau. So he directs that all the sacks should be again filled up, and the money once more returned; but that in the mouth of Benjamin's sack Joseph's cup should be carefully deposited. This was done; and when his brothers had got a short journey on their way homewards Joseph sent after them, had their sacks searched, and charged them with stealing his cup. Joseph's brothers repudiated the charge indignantly; indeed, so sure were they that the cup was not in their possession that each said that, if it could be found upon them, he in whose sack it was found should die, and the others would consent to be Joseph's bondsmen. The sacks were diligently searched: commencing with that of the eldest, the searchers opened them one by one until at last they came to the youngest, and from Benjamin's sack they triumphantly produced the cup, much to the astonishment and sorrow of Benjamin and his brothers.

Joseph now had his brethren fairly in his power ; he could virtually do with them as he pleased ; and, having expostulated with them on the wickedness of their crime, demanded that Benjamin should become his servant, and remain with him in Egypt ; while he charged the others to return home to their father. Judah, however, bravely undertook to plead for his younger brother ; and so affectingly did he tell the story of Jacob's love for Benjamin, and the supposed death of the other beloved son, that Joseph was moved to tears, and, as a climax to a most dramatic scene, he unbosomed himself to his brethren ; told them that he was their long-lost brother ; begged of them neither to be grieved nor angry with themselves for having sold him : that, after all, they had done a good thing, for by their conduct he had been enabled to become an important instrument in the saving of thousands of lives in Egypt ; embraced them all round, sent for his father, and let the curtain fall on a scene of general joy and contentment in this happy family.

JACOB'S DEATH.

Not long after the stirring scene just described—the finding of the long-lost brother, the bringing of the grey-headed father down to Egypt, and the general family reconciliation—there followed one other scene that is worthy of the reader's serious contemplation.

At the rather early age, for an ancient patriarch, of one hundred and forty-seven years, Jacob lay on a bed of sickness, stricken with an illness that was to prove fatal. Under such circumstances Joseph came to the sick bed to offer words of solace and consolation. Bringing his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him, Joseph came into his father's presence, who, on seeing him and his sons, put forth a strong effort, and, having exerted himself sufficiently to sit up in bed, made preparations for delivering the inevitable blessing, which ancient Jews appeared to regard as more important than a last will and testament. And what a blessing it was ! One would have imagined that, now Jacob knew he was about to die, he would have said a few words to his sons concerning the great injustice he had done his brother Esau, and would at least have repented the crime of defrauding his brother out of his birthright and blessing.

But no; this was not Jacob's method. Perhaps, however, he felt somewhat like Claudius, in "Hamlet," when he asked, "May one be pardoned and retain the offence?" Jacob appears to have had a dull conscience, and the follies, errors, and crimes of the past awakened no unpleasant memories in his perverted mind. Beginning his last speech on earth by the declaration that "God Almighty had appeared unto him at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed him," Jacob proceeded to pronounce a blessing, not only upon his own children, but upon those of Joseph also. But even this, his last act before giving up the ghost, he could not perform without committing a palpable injustice, first to the elder-born son of Joseph, by passing him over and pronouncing the chief blessing upon his younger brother instead; and, secondly, by pronouncing a blessing upon his own sons, Simeon and Levi, that was very much in the nature of a curse. When Jacob had finished the blessing, which on the whole was a rather long though interesting performance, we are assured that "he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

And so Jacob died!—Jacob, the favoured of God; Jacob, who, through a life of fraud, deceit, and crime, always received from Jahveh, who loved to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, encouragement and approval of his misdeeds. And this Jacob dies in bed without a pang of remorse, without a tear of regret; dies as though his life had been as blameless as that of his unfortunate brother Esau. Well might the Sceptic exclaim, "Is there justice in heaven? Do the gods reward iniquity?" For my own part, I would sooner share with Esau the anguish and troubles of a painful and chequered career than join with Jacob in the glory of his unmerited success, either in this or any other possible world beyond the grave.

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BIBLE SAINTS

AND SINNERS.

BY

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

PART III.

*The Midwives and Moses
Plaguing the Egyptians*

| *Wandering Jews
The Cry for Bread*



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BIBLE SAINTS AND SINNERS.

PART III.

THE MIDWIVES AND MOSES.

FOLLOWING the death of Joseph, we read of no Biblical saints until we come to the pious person who is supposed by orthodox Christians to have been the author of the Pentateuch. Before, however, I deal with the details of the life of Saint Moses there are two "saintesses" who deserve special mention at my hands.

By profession, these ladies were midwives, and bore the names of Shiphrah and Puah. Whether they were married or single women there is not sufficient evidence to determine; but upon them devolved the task of attending all the accouchements in Egypt, in the performance of their professional duties. Remembering that Egypt was not a small country, and that the population, including the Hebrews in bondage under Pharaoh, must have numbered some hundreds of thousands of persons, the task, it may readily be imagined, was not an easy one. The ruling Pharaoh, in common with most monarchs, was exceedingly jealous of his position; and, fearing lest the increase of the Hebrew population would lead to his overthrow, he gave orders to these two ubiquitous dames to "kill all the males" among the Hebrews at their birth, and preserve only the female children. Excusing themselves from executing these wicked instructions on the strange ground that the Hebrew women were unlike the Egyptian women, and "are lively and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them," these female doctors ran the risk of gaining Pharaoh's displeasure for the sake of winning the approval of Jahveh. Therefore, we are told the Lord "dealt well with the mid-

wives and made them houses." What sort of builder the Lord proved himself, what kind of materials he employed, who acted as his architect, why those houses were not preserved as examples of the Lord's workmanship or as models for ordinary builders in all ages and climes, are matters that will forever, I suppose, remain profound mysteries. What we do know, however, is that the action, or the want of it, on the part of the midwives resulted in the rapid increase of the Hebrew population in Egypt.

Becoming uneasy in his mind, Pharaoh issued fresh commands. He directed that all male Hebrew children should be cast into the river. And this instruction, no doubt, would have been pretty generally carried out if there had not been many obstacles in the way of its enforcement. There is no record that there were in those days any offices for the registration of births and deaths, and the mode of taking the census was far from perfect; moreover, taking into account the fact that the Hebrew women were so "lively" and were delivered before either of the midwives put in an appearance, even supposing their services were not dispensed with altogether, it would have been an easy matter to have concealed the knowledge of the birth of a male child from all save the relatives of the infant.

Thus it happened that young Moses was born, and was hidden away by his mother from Pharaoh's representative "butcher;" and for three months and afterwards he laid in a floating ark by the river's brink, with a sister "on guard" afar off watching its safety. Coming down to the river to bathe, Pharaoh's daughter chanced to see the ark among the flags, and forthwith sent one of her maids-in-waiting to fetch it. Anxious concerning the fate of the child, the young lady on the bank kept a sharp look-out, and, when she saw that Pharaoh's daughter had had the ark brought to her and opened it to see its contents, her heart doubtlessly sunk within her. Happily for young Moses, on being taken out of the ark he began to weep; his plaintive sobs so softened the heart of Pharaoh's daughter that she had compassion on him, and allowed herself to be persuaded, by the sister afore-mentioned, to engage the child's mother as nurse.

Pharaoh's daughter having adopted young Moses as her own child, the first recorded event of his life when he had grown to manhood was that, seeing an Egyptian and a

Hebrew quarrelling, he looked first in one direction—or, as we should say, first up one street, then down another—and, seeing that nobody was looking, slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand; and, if there had not been another Hebrew peeping round the corner at the time, no one would have observed this early religious murder, and we should probably have known nothing about it to this day. Finding that he had been discovered in the act of assassinating an Egyptian by one of his own countrymen, and fearing lest Pharaoh would make a note of it and either prosecute him or take the law into his own hands, Moses wisely fled to the land of Midian, where, being mistaken for an Egyptian, and having gallantly helped some young ladies to water their father's flock, he got an introduction to an old gentleman named Reuel, and soon after married Zipporah, one of his daughters. "In process of time," to use the inspired writer's own words, his wife presented him with a son, to whom was given the name of Gershom, the reason assigned for giving the child this unfamiliar name being that his father was "a stranger in a strange land."

Pharaoh the First having died, a second ruler was established in his place; but whether on the hereditary principle or not it would be impossible, at this late period of the world's history, to determine. Of this, however, we are assured, that Pharaoh the Second was a great tyrant; that he exerted his imperious will to the disadvantage of the Jews who were living in bondage under him; that he set them such difficult tasks that they groaned unceasingly under their burdens, and that their cry at length reached the throne of Jehovah, who, remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, swore inwardly to be revenged. With this view, while Moses was minding his father-in-law's flock Jehovah appeared to him "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush;" and, this "flare-up" being remarkable by reason of the bush not being consumed by the flames, Moses was attracted to the spot, and found that the Lord was enveloped in a cloud of smoke. On reaching the bush a dialogue—which I have taken the liberty to modernise a little—between Jehovah and Moses took place something after the following style:—

Jehovah (*calling*). Moses! Moses!

Moses. Yes, my Lord; here I am.

JEHOVAH. Then take off your shoes, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground. The Pope watered it only a few days ago.

MOSES. My Lord, I would do as you wish, but the truth is, I don't wear shoes, and Northampton is a long way off.

JEHOVAH (*speaking from the bush*). The hour has just approached when I to sulphurous and tormenting flames must render up myself.

MOSES (*holding his face*). Poor devil!—I mean good God!

JEHOVAH. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing to what I shall unfold.

MOSES (*applying his ear-trumpet*). Speak on; I am bound to hear.

JEHOVAH. I am the ghost of thy father Abraham's god—doomed for a certain term to live in the bush and for the day confined to fast in fires, until the foul crimes done by old Pharaoh in Egypt are burned and purged away. And but that I am forbidden by God the Son to disclose the whole affair, I could a tale unfold. But no matter; I will be revenged. Therefore I will drop into prose again. The cry of my children Israel have I heard: I will listen to their pitiful appeal no longer. Now, therefore, Moses, arise; get you up, and go down to Egypt, and tell Pharaoh for me that he must let the children go. I will be with you and deliver them; and this shall be a token unto you that I am with you, that when you have delivered the children of Israel I will meet you on this mountain and congratulate you, and you shall bow down to me, and I will take you into my employ, and you shall serve me.

MOSES. All this is very kind of you; but, if I undertake this task, who shall I say I come from; for really, my Lord, I don't know your name?

JEHOVAH. You don't? Here's my card. (*Hands Moses a card*).

JEHOVAH, SON, & CO.,

General Contractors to the Jews, by Special Appointment.

MOSES (*taking card*). Jehovah! Beg pardon; know the firm well; will undertake the task with pleasure. What commission?

JEHOVAH. Well, I will make you this promise : The firm can't afford to give you anything ; but, when you release my people and depart from their city, I give you leave to purloin jewels of silver and gold and raiment to your heart's content ; but you must do it legally and in accordance with the custom of our firm (*whispering in Moses's ear, and probing him in the ribs*). You must borrow them.

MOSES. Good idea ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! But suppose the Infidel Pharaoh should doubt that I have seen you, and that you have appointed me as your representative ; how shall I get on then ?

JEHOVAH. Doubt you ! Oh, ah ! I didn't think of that. (*Aside : I've hardened Pharaoh's heart, too, so that he shall not let the children go ; but I am determined that he shall.*) Well, this is what I propose. What is that which you have in your hand ?

MOSES. A fishing-rod.

JEHOVAH. Just the thing. Cast it on the ground.

MOSES (*casting his rod, which turns into a serpent*). Oh, swelp me Gud ! (*Runs away from it.*)

JEHOVAH. Be not afraid, my good servant. It is merely a trick of mine. And it is not the only one I can do. For example : Put forth your hand again, catch hold of the tail of the serpent, and, behold, it will turn again into a rod.

MOSES (*clutching the tail of the serpent, which is at once transformed into a rod*). Oh, swelp me ! how clever !

JEHOVAH. That's nothing ; let's try it again. Put your hand into your bosom ; now take it out again. Observe, it has become leprous—white as snow.

MOSES. So it has. Dear me !

JEHOVAH. By the same process I will restore it to its original colour. (*Query black.*) Thrust your hand again in your bosom ; now withdraw it. Observe, it is right again.

MOSES. Right you are, my Lord. Wonderful !

JEHOVAH. With these wonders you shall convince Pharaoh that I have sent you. And, if these do not suffice, you shall turn all the water in Egypt into blood.

MOSES. Into blood ?

JEHOVAH. Yes, into blood ; the Egyptians detest it. Now go, my servant. Depart in peace, according to my word.

PLAGUING THE EGYPTIANS.

Not having the noble gift of fluent speech, Moses persuaded Jehovah to allow him to be accompanied on his plagues errand to Egypt by his brother-in-law, Aaron, who, being a priest and a prophet, was presumably an orator also. Coming to the King's Palace, Moses either rang the bell, knocked, or walked in, presented his card to the hall-porter, and was conducted to the great Pharaoh's reception-room. What happened may probably be most reasonably set forth in dramatic form. And here, of course, full play may be given to the imagination. The inspired writer having given us so few details upon which to work, we may be left to amplify the story at our own will and pleasure.

Pharaoh's Palace. A flourish of trumpets within. Enter MOSES (as Paul Pry, hat in hand, umbrella under arm), followed by BROTHER AARON.

HALL-PORTER. Your business, gentlemen.

MOSES. Is his majesty within?

HALL-PORTER. I believe 'e his, gentlemen?

MOSES. Thanks. Give him my card.

HALL-PORTER. Pleasure, gentlemen; pleasure. (*Bows himself off.*)

Another flourish of trumpets within.

HALL-PORTER (*returns; to MOSES and AARON*). This way, if you please, gentlemen.

SCENE II.—*Grand Reception Hall. PHARAOH discovered reading "The Maiden Tribute of Ancient Egypt." Enter MOSES and AARON.*

PHARAOH. Be seated, I pray you.

AARON. Your majesty, my brother, Moses here, has come, on behalf of Messrs. Jehovah & Co., to make a friendly demand of you.

MOSES. Oh, yes, perfectly friendly, I assure you.

AARON. In short, he has come to ask the release of the Israelites employed in your establishment. They have a little grievance, and the said firm has taken it up.

PHARAOH (*smiling*). Indeed!

MOSES. Yes, indeed, your majesty; and, if you don't

release them quietly and at once, we shall have to take steps—

PHARAOH. What's that—a threat?

AARON. My brother may be a little impetuous, your majesty; but the fact is, we think the demand a reasonable one, and we have great hopes that you will concede our request.

PHARAOH. Concede, be hanged! How do I know who you are?

MOSES. Show him, Aaron; down with the rod.

AARON. Your majesty will observe that I hold in my hand a rod, which, if I do but cast upon the ground, will instantly turn into a serpent.

PHARAOH (*giggling*). Indeed!

MOSES. Yes, indeed, your majesty.

AARON (*throwing rod upon ground*). There, incredulous king; behold!

(*PHARAOH bursts into a roar of laughter, and sends for his Magicians.*) *Enter Magicians, each carrying in his hand a rod.*

PHARAOH. Magicians, you see what these tricksters have done. Now, give us a display of your power.

(*Magicians simultaneously throw down their rods, which at once turn into serpents, and wriggle furiously on floor of the palace.*)

PHARAOH (*smiling; to MOSES and AARON*). You see my magicians can equal that.

MOSES. But look, your majesty, how my brother's serpent gobbles up all the rest.

PHARAOH. So it does; hungry, perhaps.

AARON. No, that's my power; I mean Jehovah's power.

(*PHARAOH'S heart being still hardened, AARON tries again.*)

AARON. But, your majesty, I respectfully declare that I will turn all the water in all the rivers, lakes, pools, vessels, and throughout the land into blood if you do not release these people.

PHARAOH (*puts his hand to his heart, and murmurs that it is getting harder*). Try it.

AARON (*stretches forth his rod, and strikes all vessels con-*

taining water, from the wash-hand basin down to the spittoon).
There ! all blood.

MOSES. Yes ; b—b—blood !

PHARAOH (*chuckling*). Now, magicians, try your hand.
(*Magicians throw down rods, and all the rest is turned into blood*).

PHARAOH. That, gentlemen, surpasses your trick. Come, try another ; I begin to enjoy them ; saves me patronising Professor Anderson.

AARON (*strikes his rod*). Frogs, your majesty.

MAGICIAN (*striking rods*). Frogs, gentlemen.

PHARAOH. Good again.

MOSES. Now, Aaron, give it to them this time.

AARON (*vigorously throwing down rod*). Lice, your majesty.

MAGICIANS (*following ; cannot produce anything*). We candidly confess, your majesty, that we cannot do this ; we perceive that Jehovah has had a hand in it ; but it is a very dirty trick.

(AARON and MOSES *rush at Magicians, and strike them with rods ; a fight ensues, during which Messrs. MOSES and AARON get thrown out of the palace*).

MOSES (*in street*). All right, Aaron, we'll give it to Pharaoh now. The Egyptians shall have it.

(AARON *plagues PHARAOH with flies ; gives a plague of murrain to beasts, boils and blains to Egyptians ; pelts them with hail ; punishes them with locuts and darkness ; and, as a climax, slaughters the first born in all Pharaoh's establishments*).

EGYPTIANS (*rushing out of the houses ; to AARON and MOSES*). Villians, you have slain our brothers and sisters and plagued us with terrible plagues. Get out of our land, we pray you ; you are fiends from hell. Take our goods, our jewels of silver and gold, and get you gone !

MOSES (*to AARON*). Oh, swelp me ! jewels of silver and gold ! Come on, Aaron.

Between them, these saints then clear out all the valuable property of the Egyptians, call on parade all the Israelites released at the command of Pharaoh, or escaped amid un-

speakable confusion; drill them into marching order, and make straightway for the Red Sea.

WANDERING JEWS.

At the command of Moses, the children of Israel gathered together in one vast assembly, and, taking a circuitous route, marched in the direction of the Red Sea. Exodus tells us that "the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, even very much cattle" (Exodus xii. 37, 38). Imagine, dear reader, this huge concourse of people preparing to start. First they have to be got together. And it is not the six hundred thousand armed men alone that constitute this great mass of living beings, nor the mixed multitude that went with them, but the enormous crowd of women and children, and, in addition, the flocks and herds and cattle. By the sounding of many bugles the armed men might be called together, and form themselves into good marching order in a few weeks. Not so, however, with women and children. Unused to emergencies of this kind, they would wander about in uncertainty from place to place, losing, perhaps, some of their numerous progeny in the crowd, meeting relatives and friends at one spot, and losing sight of them again amid the surging to and fro of the eager, excited multitude. Think of half the population of London being collected together at one familiar spot and marched off to Epping Forest, and some faint notion of the tremendous difficulties of the situation, or impossibility of the occurrence, will dawn upon the imagination. The heads of families must be informed that they will be required at a certain place at a certain time on a certain day. How was this to be done? In the days of Moses there were no newspapers to convey the information, no telegraph wires, no postmen. It is rational to assume that many could not make ready at a moment's notice. Thousands would be ill at home or in hospitals, if there were any. Thousands of women would be near childbirth; for among a vast population, numbering at least two millions of people, there would be not less than 250 births a day, and almost as

many deaths. And what would become of the blind, the lame, and the halt? How could they make ready? And what of those suffering from diseases of the zymotic order? And how were the armed men to get into order? On all hands they would be surrounded by an impatient, distressed, and disorderly crowd, which would so hamper their movements as to render a march of twenty, or even ten, abreast impossible. But suppose the armed men, by extraordinary efforts, to have been marshalled in order with the mixed multitude, the women and children to bring up the rear, what, then, would be done with the flocks and herds and cattle? A flock of sheep amid a crowd of people would stand a poor chance of reaching a definite destination. No doubt the cattle could easily clear the path and increase the velocity of women and children; but with such a scattering as to add to the difficulties of the journey. Some of my readers may have witnessed such a scene; for example, as a crowd of Sunday-school scholars excursion bound. They are on the road to a London railway station, the girls leading the way. Of a sudden, as the lady teachers and beautiful rosy-cheeked girls are about to turn the corner of a busy thoroughfare, a number of black, big-horned bulls uncereemoniously present themselves, and, to the apparent amazement of the poor beasts, the teachers and girls and children scamper for dear life. In the days of pious Moses women and children may not have had an inherent fear of horned cattle; or, perhaps, on the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, Jahveh worked a few miracles for the especial benefit of the young, the weak, and the helpless. All the difficulties attending this extraordinary event may be piously overcome by an if, perhaps, or may be.

But where were these funny descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob going? They were going to the desert of Sinai. And what a route they took! It was as though they started from London for Birmingham, and went *via* Brighton and the South Coast; or, being at Finsbury, they went by rail from Moorgate Street to get to the Mansion House. But they start, and the journey is enlivened by what may be termed Jahveh's drunken feat of turning night into day and day into night; a pillar of cloud obscuring the Israelites' vision by day, and a pillar of fire illuminating their path by night.

While on the road, congratulating themselves upon the native cunning with which they had succeeded in borrowing the Egyptians' jewels, they were rudely awakened from their self-complacency by the rattling of chariot wheels and the stamping of horses over the dry earth. Though the Lord and six hundred thousand armed men were on their side, the Israelites seemed greatly to fear Pharaoh and the few brave Egyptians that rallied to his cry of Vengeance, sweet and speedy! There could not have been many Egyptians, for had not almost all of them been slain several times by plagues, not to mention those of the first-born who went to bed and forgot to wake up on the following morning? Nor could there have been many horses, unless they were borrowed from the Israelites, or resurrected from the remains of those that were killed by the plague of murrain, or survived the tremendous pelting of hail-stones. Reaching the Red Sea in the nick of time, Moses stretched out his invincible rod, and, striking it vigorously on the earth, cried out, "Open Sesame!" or "Ah Presto!" or something of the sort, and parted the waters of the Red Sea "in the middle." The waters stood up like a wall on either side. Probably Moses's rod froze the waters for the time being, and the Israelites made a sliding path through to the other side.

And now for the struggle. The six hundred thousand armed men pass through the Red Sea in safety; the flocks and herds are carried through on the shoulders of able-bodied labourers, to keep themselves in exercise; the cattle skate leisurely over the well-worn track, and the women and children—even the last small boy who will stand on his head in the middle of the path to show his defiance of the Egyptian army—are just rescued from the fast-encircling waters when the foot of the first Egyptian reaches the shore on the other side. Then Moses, having flapped his rod several times on the earth, turns defiantly to the Egyptians on the other side, and, placing his thumb gently against the tip of his nose, extends his fingers gracefully towards his enemy, and, in a transport of delight, exclaims, with all the dignity and culture of a prophet, "Bah-oo!"

And now a glorious sight is presented to the Israelites. Undaunted by the inrolling of the waves, the Egyptians pursue their foes with a fury bordering on madness, and Jahveh, to prevent them reaching his beloved people, pulls

off the chariot wheels, and leaves Pharaoh and the Egyptian army struggling and shrieking and groaning and suffocating in the sea. A glorious sight truly ! A god taking off wheels, overturning chariots, goading men on to vengeance and destruction—a god consigning a great cargo of human beings to a watery grave to satisfy his own ambition and please his followers—is an event never to be forgotten or forgiven. Who could ever love such a god as this again—who ever trust him, and who but a slave ever worship him ? And yet in this era of civilisation, when there are asylums for idiots, institutions for the blind and for those who are bodily afflicted—when there are unions for the aged poor, clubs for the idle and rich, and a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—it is astonishing that there is no association for the resistance of gratuitous and murderous assaults of a barbarous Jewish deity. Let us establish one forthwith. But who shall be the first President ? I have it. We cannot do better than go to the Egyptians. They have been the greatest sufferers ; they shall have the honour, therefore, of electing the first President of the God-resisting Society. What think you of Arabi Pasha ? Good ? Yes. Arabi elected accordingly.

THE CRY FOR BREAD.

The Song of Moses, after he had witnessed the sight just described, was, without exception, one of the most disgusting shouts of triumph that ever a brutal barbarian gave utterance to in the hour of victory. If the Israelites had defeated the Egyptians in a fair encounter, if they had met them on anything approaching equal terms, there might have been some excuse for a song of exultation. Quite the contrary, however, was the case.

With the assistance of Jahveh, Moses and his men had taken every possible advantage of the enemy ; in short, the Egyptians had been subjected to all sorts of injustices ; their cattle had been destroyed before their eyes ; they had been plagued with all sorts of abominations ; their first-born had been mercilessly slain ; and when they, in righteous revolt at such injustice, took up the sword to avenge these crimes, Jahveh pulled off their chariot wheels and destroyed a whole host of Egyptian patriots, who

courageously followed Moses and his cowardly crew to the borders of the Red Sea.

Moses, feeling himself perfectly safe from further pursuit, then sang a song unto the Lord. Here are a few choice specimens of the kind of war song that is apparently acceptable to the Jewish Deity. Moses shouts :—

I will sing a song unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation ; he is *my* God, and I will prepare him an habitation ; my father's God and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a *man of war* ; the Lord is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea ; his chosen captains are drowned in the Red Sea

With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

Thou stretchedst out thy right hand ; the earth swallowed them.

After numerous repetitions of this kind of thing, the Israelites wandered on the wilderness of Shur ; and for three days they were without water or anything to drink. Then some of the Israelites began to think that, perhaps, it would have been just as well if they had remained in Egypt and had had no triumphant march through the Red Sea. At last, however, water was forthcoming ; Moses produced it from a tree ; but it was rather hard on his followers to let them thirst for over three days before he thought of performing this miracle. Wandering still further into the wilderness, to a place called Sin, the Israelites found themselves in a worse predicament than before ; for now they had nothing to eat and the whole congregation murmured against Moses. Well might some of them exclaim with the Irish poet :—

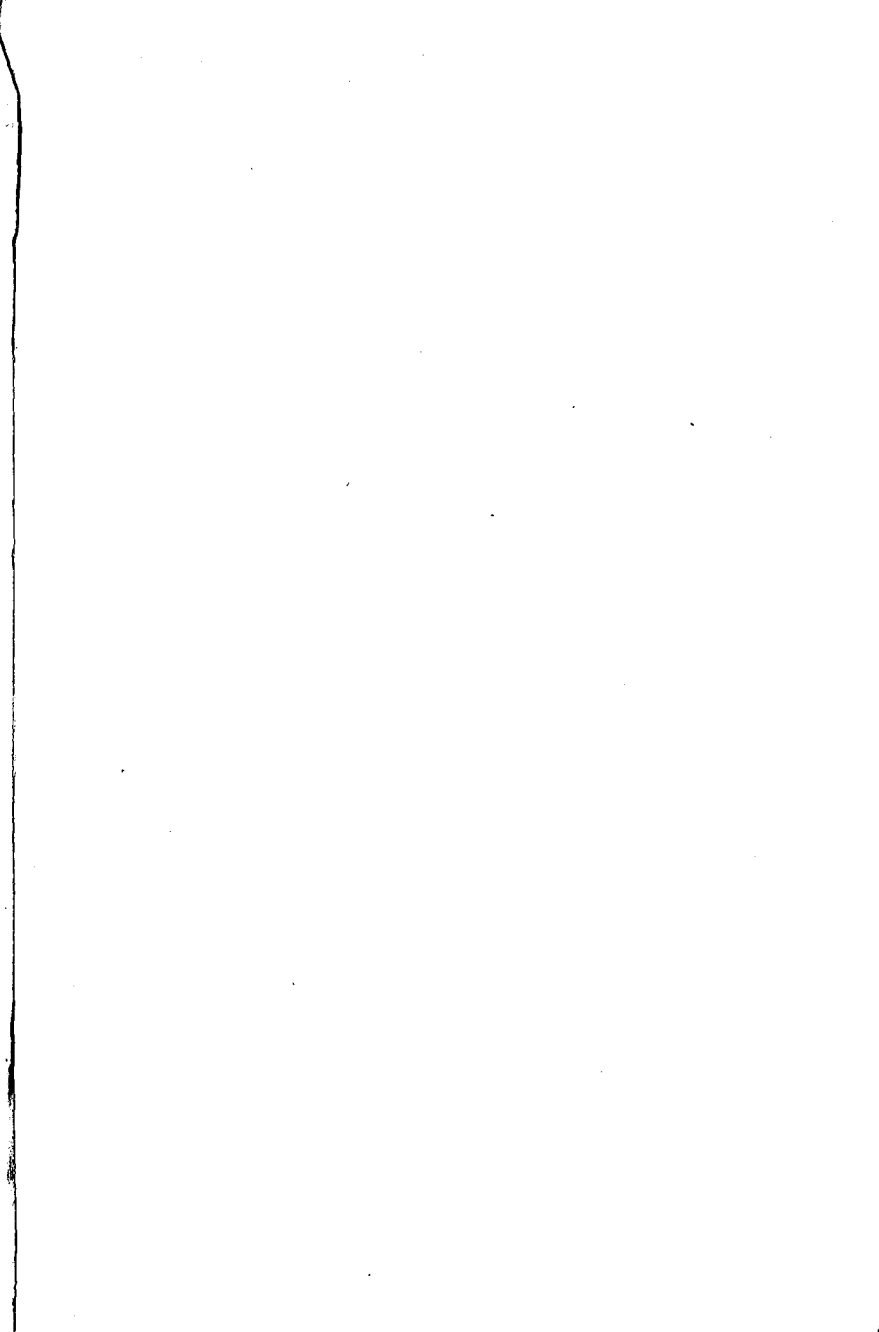
“ The cry went up for bread :
Oh, my Lord, it's a frightful doom
To be praying for bread in a mother's womb.”

But, though the Irish pray never so earnestly, no God has ever been known to give heed to their appeal. Not so with the Israelites. Were they in want of water?—Jahveh could supply it. In want of bread?—Jahveh could rain manna from the skies. Lucky Israelites ! Favoured mortals ! The Lord not only sent the children of Israel plenty of manna, but, on the sixth day, he sent them a double doze, so that

they might not be guilty of so heinous a crime as gathering bread on a Sabbath. Not satisfied yet, the Israelites murmured once again. They wanted not only bread to eat, or manna as a substitute, but meat also. To satisfy them, therefore, Jahveh supplied them with large quantities of quails. But, even then, some were dissatisfied, and ever and anon murmured against Moses, so that, during the forty years' sojourn of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Moses was not without trouble or anxiety, and probably more than once cursed the day when he undertook the task of conducting this motley crew to the "promised land."

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE MIRROR OF FREETHOUGHT	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	0
BIBLE MAKERS	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	1
THE BIBLE GOD	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	1
DARWIN v. MOSES	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	1
DESIGN AND NATURAL SELECTION	0	1
TWO REVELATIONS...	0	1
THE OLD FAITH AND THE NEW	0	1





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